Sarah V. Clement

CIRCUMFERENCE

VARIETIES OF METAPHYSICAL VERSE

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For the past two years, Mr. S. A. Jacobs has patiently abetted to the extent of collaboration, the labor of reading and editing for this book. It is, therefore, a great pleasure to put it into his hands, to be justly designed and printed. Few books are so fortunate. And I request the reader to accept the following collection as a suggestion for further inquiries in this line, not as a definitive or final selection.

Genevieve Taggard

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PART I

CIRCUMFERENCE BY GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

CIRCUMFERENCE

"My business is circumference."
EMILY DICKINSON in a letter to COLONEL HIGGINSON,
July 1862

FOR some centuries English critics have been at work to revise or apply the term *metaphysical* given John Donne and his school. The word does very well, I think, if we use it of poetry, to describe a state of mind, not to designate a system of thought with the exactitude of the philosopher or the scientist.* "Dryden gave the term metaphysical to the odd terminology of Donne's poetic philosophy," says Gosse, "and Johnson borrowing the suggestion, defined the school to describe not Donne only, but all the amorous and philosophical poets who succeeded him, and who employed a similarly fantastic language, and who affected odd figurative inversions.

* "The poet is a valued member of the community, for he is known to be a poet; his value will increase as he grows to recognize the deeper insight into nature with which modern science provides him. The metaphysician is a poet, often a very great one, but unfortunately he is not known to be a poet, because he strives to clothe his poetry in the language of reason, and hence it follows that he is liable to be a dangerous member of the community."—KARL PEARSON: *Grammar of Science,* PART I, p. 17.

The influence of Donne upon the literature of England," Mr. Gosse concludes, "was singularly wide and deep, although almost wholly malign."

I have been attempting to collect into a book what may be considered the most malignant of Donne's verses, together with others since his time, down to the present, which seem to bear them a good comparison, not merely from the school commonly supposed to be metaphysical, but from English and American poets generally. There are more poems of this *genre* than poets; with many lyric and dramatic minds, the metaphysical is a mood assumed for the moment, or one manner of approach, not a constant quality. Unless we agree to use Donne as the measure of the metaphysical poet, and draw all others to scale, we must admit to begin with, that in searching for the Metaphysical Poem we are only after an abstraction. A long search, however, among many approximations, and repeated varieties, gives a reader a certain knack at imagining the purest possibility of treatment, of which the poems one encounters are only less acute designs.

I must state at the outset that I find only two genuinely metaphysical poets of the first order of clarity in the entire span of our poetry. So far as an unscholarly knowledge can contend, with the use of a definition that comes from a study of forms and habitual choices of material, I find this kind of mind perfectly exampled only in John Donne and Emily Dickinson. Dante, Goethe and Lucretius live in other languages.

"Metaphysical poetry," says Grierson, in his excellent introduction to *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century,* "in the full sense of the term, is a poetry which, like that of the *Divina Commedia,* the *De Natura Rerum* and perhaps Goethe's *Faust,* has been inspired by a philosophical conception of the universe

and the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence. These poems were written because a definite interpretation of the riddle, the atoms of Epicurus rushing through infinite empty space, the theology of the schoolmen as elaborated in the catechetical disquisitions of St. Thomas, Spinoza's vision of life *sub specie aeternitatis,* beyond good and evil, laid hold on the mind and the imagination of a great poet, unified and illumined his comprehension of life, intensified and heightened his personal consciousness of joy and sorrow, of hope and fear, by broadening their significance, revealing to him in the history of his own soul, a brief abstract of the drama of human destiny. 'Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man.' Its themes are the simplest experiences of the surface of life, sorrow and joy, love and battle, the peace of the country, the bustle and stir of towns, but equally the boldest conceptions, the profoundest intuitions, the subtlest and most complex classifications and 'discourse of reason,' if into these, too, the poet can 'carry sensation,' make of them passionate experiences communicable in vivid and moving imagery, in rich and varied harmonies."

Johnson and Dryden described the seventeenth century poet as a man of learning who drew on his knowledge for his phrases, symbols and comparisons, and who treated of matters "beyond physics." The eighteenth century being unable when it made its definition to know the work of Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Browning, and Blake, should be pardoned for covering them all, and leaving, still, room for another kind of poet—in no way defining a temperament that marks John Donne from John Keats. However, the eighteenth century does have in mind something it has not defined. Taking Donne as an example, it wished to describe a

scientific sharpness and an angularity; a saltiness of phrase designated by them as "wit"; and a coldness that made it possible for the mind to probe itself, as it writes of itself, lavishly and unmercifully. All this was concealed under the large word, *learning*. "Beyond physics" involved God, the universe, and the soul's torments —psychological poetry.

Such a poet is born with a salty sanity in his bones. He will take neither (Keatsian) sensuous assurance of life, nor (Miltonic) moral glory, nor a Poesque exit into madness. What he needs to find is a thoughtful pattern for the universe—a need in him so pressing that he is inclined to himself present the universe with that pattern when it is lacking. Ideas being for this temperament as real as grass blades or locomotives, the poet's imagination is always riding the two horses in the circus, Idea and Fact; they gallop neck and neck in his work, he has a genius for both the concrete word and the dazzling concept. In Donne's case the two horses got to galloping apart after a time—he saw that he finally must take to one or the other. Religion and Philosophy fascinated his mediaevalism—a grave-yard of ideas that might be dissected or shown to have a functioning structure. But Science fascinated him too, Galileo and Copernicus gave him the food his imagination craved; from them, for a time, he constructed his new philosophies—having played at paste till qualified for pearl—until the labor of putting raw science in relation to the world's cultural knowledge got to be too difficult. Such a labor is not the work of one man; a poet may only perform it with some group to pick and cull for him. And because Donne had to have a coherent universe, even though a fictitious one, he went over to God.

Perhaps my definition will seem to my readers to cover a large number of poets still. Shakespeare's mind

lived in a metaphysical country and the image of its bigness casts a shadow over all who have written since. But his dramatic and human gifts enrich on one hand where his lyricism etherializes on the other, this faculty, so that we have it only best expressed in speeches in the plays, in single ejaculations, unexcelled and unravelled; and in the less musical sonnets. Milton, who had learning, and who did his best in his mammoth fashion, to construct a scheme worthy of God and Man, lacks the wit and the impudence and has none of the subjective sense that makes the dilemma of the metaphysical mind. Pope and Dryden used metaphysical material. Pope delighted in changing the shape of an idea into a metal ribbon. Dryden built a word cathedral of regular, formal prosody. Keats is the clearest possible example of what a metaphysical poet is not. His truth is in essence, not in pattern; he knows the substance of life to be sufficient; any scheme was to Keats, extraneous. Whether this belief would have continued in him is a matter for speculation—as he grew into his forties and fifties, the romantic philosophy might have beaten itself out into a hardness and the meaning of design. The Eve of St. Agnes is sensuous in the highest possible fulfilment.

> Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
> At these voluptuous accents, he arose

Beside this Donne's

> Then since that I may know
> As liberally, as to a Midwife, shew
> Thy selfe; cast all, yea this white
> linnen hence. . . .

is cold and mental, however human; curiosity is its deepest impulse.

Coleridge and Poe, with Swinburne, Rossetti and the rest of the noisy, windy, wild young poets abandon the

world of metaphysical exactitude for mad splendors—their poetry is a kind of projected psychology; they show what the mind may feel and imagine if inflated and elongated. The true metaphysician is subjective, but he wants his mental stuff unstimulated; the complete abnormal does not interest him. Blake, fierce and tender, who saw visions on English greens, made a lamb and a tiger with a simplicity and an insight one step beyond the mind. Science, for him was a hellish invention against the spirit of man. He says "Go winged thought, widen his forehead," of the negro—and means what he says. Metaphysicians do not mean what they say: they propose possibilities; their world is all hypothesis compact. Making mind and emotion one, as no one else but Keats has approximated, Blake says: "A tear is an intellectual thing." The metaphysician is neither fierce nor tender, as was Blake. He is a stoic, and has small joy in even that attitude.

Wordsworth and Shelley both meditate continually on man's destiny, the universe's destiny, and cover much, with Tennyson, that Donne (our metaphysical measure) if a modern, would attempt. But they separate themselves off by an attitude of worship; a lack of saltiness and homeliness. When Wordsworth tried to be homely he wrote the *Idiot Boy;* when Tennyson tried to be terse, he wrote *In Memoriam* which succeeds now and then in being simple. When Shelley wrote the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* he filled it with vague hues, full of desire, but as removed from the earth as a blowing cloud. Vague nobility is not the metaphysician's favorite note. Wordsworth, Shelley and Tennyson were all a little too bright and good for human nature's daily food. Donne's frank eroticism which they lack makes a good beginning for the whole self—unities are essential—the whole universe, the whole man. In the end God be-

comes his unity and to Him he speaks curtly, as to an honored inescapable fact, with his own antagonistic majesty:

> Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
> Which was my sin, though it was done before?
> Wilt thou forgive that sin; through which I run,
> And do run still; though still I do deplore?
> When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
> For I have more.

Browning most clearly has characteristics that link him with Shakespeare and Donne, and give him the task of taking up the actual world as where they put it down. He has a rich human variety, and an ability to ponder in all sanity the unravellings of the mind. He wants his people dynamic, not anatomies, however:—*She had a heart somehow too soon made glad*, is too alive when taken in its context. Donne, or Shakespeare, only, of all English poets, might have written, in Browning's place, *The Light Woman*. Splendid and broad as Browning's blade is, at times it lacks the keen edge of the lightly acid gentlemen, his two forbears. His dramatic monologues desert the nicety of metaphysical tracing; first and last, (with noble exceptions) he runs to God a little too swiftly, because of a lack of subtlety, I think, or a love of benignity.

For all these swift judgments exceptions abound; in the poet most foreign to this as a constant state of mind, there are moods when the metaphysical comes uppermost. Blake, Wordsworth, Browning all write approximates of what I would call the pure metaphysical poem; and of their many poems I hope I have chosen the best for my collection.

But in either the welltrodden or the ragged by-paths of English-American poetry I can only discover one

mind whose predominant flavor is in Donne's world. Emily Dickinson, nineteenth-century recluse, and the seventeenth-century Dean of St. Paul's were both attempting a revolutionary technique, and a plain homely grandeur. Neither quality has been very well understood. That angularity complained of by Johnson and Dryden in Donne, became the snare of Colonel Higginson's platitudes when he tried to give Emily Dickinson helpful criticism. What these critics could not see was that both these poets were deserting formal composition for the subtlest of all techniques—the form of an idea. Critics have demanded an external lyric gloss of many poets who should have gone on eliminating to the metaphysical extent. Ideas are irregular; they are beautiful in their entire uniqueness as pure form when simply revealed as idea, not as some form of expression. To give an idea no form but itself, to show it as organic by an inner music, as if the bones of a skeleton were singing in their own rhythm—that is the technical obsession of the metaphysical poet. Beside him every other poet becomes a little diffuse and decorative.

Emily confessed her desire when she wrote to "scalp the naked soul." Few poets would pretend to so little, or do so much. Where Donne allows his cerebral fancy and his pedantry to spin out, past his climax (which so often comes in one line or two, followed by a larger climax, not so acute) Emily says, making of one thought the design of a poem:

> The heart asks pleasure first,
> And then excuse from pain;
> And then those little anodynes
> That deaden suffering;
> And then, to go to sleep,
> And then, if it should be

The will of its Inquisitor
The liberty to die.

Such a sharp knife has rarely flashed in literature. In the same world of the mind's comment on the mind, find:

What fortitude that soul contains
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot
The opening of a door

Donne if anyone might have conceived:

Pain has an element of blank

or:

The brain within its groove
Runs evenly and true.

The wit, the power to make an epigram which Donne's age so loved, is all in Emily Dickinson. A poem made into a prose sentence reads as follows:

"Surgeons must be very careful when they take the knife. Underneath their fine incisions, stirs the Culprit, Life!"

It is the same colloquial downright phrase that Donne so used, to say:

I am two fools I know
For loving and for saying so
In whining poetry;

And:

If the unborn
Must learn, by my being cut up and torn
Kill and dissect me love; for this
Torture against thine own end is,
Racked carcasses make ill anatomies.

The mind of Emily Dickinson has the power of a microscope. To the small facts that fall so well within a

woman's knowledge she applies the enlarging gift of her imagination—with the result that she does just what Blake wanted himself to do: She sees the world in a grain of sand. She gives us universe in atoms, makes a death in eight lines wild and gigantic as a dramatist of pure terror:

> We noticed smallest things—
> Things overlooked before,
> By this great light upon our minds
> Italicized, as 'twere.

The last stanza of this poem is perhaps the most purely majestic writing done in our country.

Donne does not inspect Dickinson's minutiae—he tries to get the seen and the unseen into one scope. He complains of science:

> The new philosophy calls all in doubt,
> The Element of Fire is quite put out;
> The Sun is lost, and the earth, and no man's wit
> Can well direct him where to look for it.
> And freely men confess that this world's spent
> When in the Planets and the Firmament
> They seek so many new; they see that this
> Is crumbled out again to his atomies.

The mass of science, hinted by the half discoveries of his age, was so enormous that Donne's mind could not put it in order. He needed order:

> Poor soul, in this thy flesh what dost thou know?
> Thou know'st thy self so little, as thou know'st not
> How thou did'st die, nor how thou was't begot.
>
> * * *
>
> We see in Authors, too stiff to recant
> A hundred controversies of an Ant
> And yet one watches, starves, freezes and sweats,
> To know but Catechisms and Alphabets.

So we have Donne—a mind, said De Quincy, which gives us "thoughts and descriptions which have the fervent and gloomy sublimity of Ezekiel or Aeschylus." A mind religious because cosmological with neither real awe nor love for the God who was so necessary to it;—irreverent, racy, actual and at times pedantic and fragmentary in the extreme.

Donne's collapse as a rebellious and worldly intellect —when by the voltage of his work we are forced to conclude that he had more intensity, and cut of us a bolder facet than Emily Dickinson—makes the significant suggestion for us that it was less possible to follow the bent of such a mind in his day than it was in 1850, or than it is today. Science is lamented and deplored by contemporary romanticists. For the metaphysical poet, Science is the freedom of the universe—and in the future our greatest poets may well be poets of this mind. Some Moses striking a rock on the desert Mr. Eliot describes as the wasteland and with his touch liberating a vast unused mentality; the excitement of enormous sweeps, the dizziness of looking in all directions at the surrounding fact.

PART II
VARIETIES OF METAPHYSICAL VERSE

CIRCUMFERENCE

PART II

WILLIAM DUNBAR
1465-1530

Lament for the Makaris

I THAT in heill was and glaidness
Am trublit now with great seikness
And feblit with infirmitie:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Our plesance heir is all vain glory,
This fals world is but transitory,
The flesh is brukle, the Feynd is slee:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

The state of man does change and vary,
Now sound, now sick, now blyth, now sary,
Now dansand mirry, now like to die:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

No state in Erd heir standis sicker;
As with the wynd wavis the wicker
So wavis this world's vanitie:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Unto the Deid gois all Estatis,
Princis, Prelattis, and Potestatis,
Baith rich and poor of all degre:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

That strang unmercifull tyrand
Takis, on the motheris breast sowkand,
The babe full of benighitie:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He takis the campioun in the stour,
The captain closit in the tour,
The lady in bour full of bewtie:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He spairis no lord for his piscence
Na clerk for his intelligence;
His awfull straik may no man flee:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Art-Magicianis and astrologis,
Rethoris, logicianis, and theologis,
Them helpis no conclusionis slee:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

In medecyne the most practicianis,
Leechis, surrigianis and physicianis,
Themself fra Death may nocht supplee:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

He has done petuously devour
The noble Chaucer, of makaris flour,
The Monk of Bury, and Gower, all three:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

That scorpion fell hes done infeck
Maister John Clerk, and James Afflek,
Fra ballat-making and tragedie:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Clerk of Tranent eke he hes tane,
That made the awnteris of Gawane;
Sir Gilbert Hay endit hes he:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

And he hes now tane, last of a,
Good gentil stobo and Quintyne Shaw,
Of quhom all wichtis hes pitie:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Good Maister Walter Kennedy
In poynt of dede lies verily;
Great ruth it were that no suld be:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Sen he hes all my brothers tane,
He will nocht let me live alane;
Of force I mon his next prey be:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

Since for the death remeid is none,
Best is that we for death dispone
After our death that live may we:—
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

WILLIAM DUNBAR

WILLIAM BYRD
1540-1623

My Mind to Me

My mind to me a kingdom is,
Such perfect joy therein I find
As far exceeds all earthly bliss
That God or nature hath assigned;
Though much I want that most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

Content I live, this is my stay:
I seek no more than may suffice:
I press to bear no haughty sway:
Look, what I lack, my mind supplies.
Lo! thus I triumph like a king,
Content with what my mind doth bring.

I see how plenty surfeits oft,
And hasty climbers soonest fall;
I see that such as sit aloft
Mishap doth threaten most of all:
These get with toil and keep with fear;
Such cares my mind could never bear.

Some have too much, yet still they crave;
I little have, yet seek no more;
They are but poor, though much they have,
And I am rich with little store!
They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
They lack, I lend; they pine, I live.

I laugh not at another's loss,
I grudge not at another's gain:
No worldly wave my mind can toss,
I brook that is another's bane:
I fear no foe, nor fawn on friend;
I loathe not life, nor dread mine end.

I wish but what I have at will,
I wander not to seek for more,
I like the plain, I climb no hill,
In greatest storms I sit on shore,
And laugh at them that toil in vain,
To get what must be lost again.

My wealth is health and perfect ease,
  My conscience clear my chief defence;
I never seek by bribes to please,
  Nor by desert to give offense;
Thus do I live, thus will I die,
Would all did so as well as I.

WILLIAM BYRD

SIR WALTER RALEIGH
1552-1618

The Soul's Errand

Go, Soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless errand;
Fear not to touch the best;
The truth shall be thy warrant;
  Go, since I needs must die,
  And give them all the lie.

Go tell the Court it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Go tell the Church it shows
What's good, but does no good:
  If Court and Church reply
  Give Court and Church the lie.

Tell Potentates they live
Acting, but oh! their actions;
Not loved, unless they give,
Nor strong but by their factions;
  If Potentates reply,
  Give Potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition,
That rule affairs of state,
Their purpose is ambition;
Their practice only hate:
  And if they do reply,
  Then give them all the lie.

Tell those that brave it most
They beg for more by spending,
Who in their greatest cost
Seek nothing but commending:
And if they make reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

Tell Zeal it lacks devotion;
Tell Love it is but lust;
Tell Time it is but motion;
Tell Flesh it is but dust;
And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.

Tell Age it daily wasteth;
Tell Honor now it alters;
Tell Beauty that it blasteth;
Tell Favor that she falters:
And as they do reply,
Give every one the lie.

Tell Wit how much it wrangles
In fickle points of niceness;
Tell Wisdom *she* entangles
Herself in over wiseness;
And if they do reply,
Then give them both the lie.

Tell Physic of her boldness;
Tell Skill it is pretension;
Tell Charity of coldness;
Tell Law it is contention:
And if they yield reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell Fortune of her blindness;
Tell Nature of decay;
Tell Friendship of unkindness;
Tell Justice of delay;
And if they do reply,
Then give them still the lie.

Tell Arts they have no soundness,
But vary by esteeming;
Tell Schools they lack profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming,
If Arts and Schools reply,
Give Arts and Schools the lie.

Tell Faith it's fled the city;
Tell how the country erreth;
Tell, Manhood shakes off pity;
Tell, Virtue least prefereth;
And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I
Command thee, done blabbing,
Although to give the lie
Deserves no less than stabbing:
Yet stab at thee who will,
No stab the Soul can kill!

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
1554-1586

True Love

My true-love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for the other given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven:
His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides:
His heart his wound received from my sight;
My heart was wounded with his wounded heart;
For as from me on him his hurt did light,
So still methought in me his hurt did smart:
Both, equal hurt, in this change sought our bliss.
My true-love hath my heart, and I have his.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

ROBERT SOUTHWELL
1561-1595

Upon the Image of Death

Before my face the picture hangs
That dailie should put me in minde
Of those cold qualms and bitter pangs
That shortly I am like to finde:
But yet, alas! full little I
Do think hereon, that I must die.

I often look upon a face.
Most uglie, grislie, bare, and thin;
I often view the hollow place
Where eyes and nose have sometime been;
I see the bones across that lie;
Yet little think, that I must die.

I read the label underneathe,
That telleth me whereto I must:
I see the sentence eke that saithe
"Remember, man, that thou art duste;"
But yet, alas, but seldom I
Do think indeed, that I must die!

Continually at my bed's head
An hearse doth hang, which doth me tell
That I, ere morning, may be dead,
Though now, I feel myself full well:
But yet, alas, for all this, I
Have little minde that I must die!

The gowne which I do use to weare,
The knife, wherewith I cut my meate,
And eke that old and ancient chair
Which is my only usual seate,
All these do tell me I must die;
And yet my life amende not I!

My ancestors are turned to clay,
And many of my mates are gone;
My youngers daily drop away;—
And can I think to 'scape alone?
No, no, I know that I must die;
And yet my life amende not I!

Though all the east did quake to hear
Of Alexander's dreadful name,
And all the west did likewise fear
The sound of Julius Cæsar's fame,
Yet both by death in duste now lie;
Who then can 'scape, but he must die?

If none can 'scape Death's dreadful darte,
If rich and poor his beck obey,
If strong, if wise, if all do smarte,
Then I to 'scape shall have no way.
O grant me grace, O God, that I
My life may mende, sith I must die!

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

THOMAS NASHE
1561-1601

Adieu! Farewell Earth's Bliss!

Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!
This world uncertain is:
Fond are life's lustful joys,
Death proves them all but toys.
None from his darts can fly:
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,
Gold cannot buy you health;
Physic himself must fade;
All things to end are made;
The plague full swift goes by:
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour:
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye:
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

Strength stoops unto the grave;
Worms feed on Hector brave;
Swords may not fight with fate;
Earth still holds ope her gate;
Come! Come! the bells do cry:
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

Wit with his wantonness,
Tasteth death's bitterness;
Hell's executioner
Hath no ears for to hear
What vain art can reply.
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

Haste, therefore, each degree
To welcome destiny!
Heaven is our heritage;
Earth but a player's stage.
Mount we unto the sky!
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

THOMAS NASHE

SAMUEL DANIEL
1562-1619

Love Is a Sickness

Love is a sickness full of woes,
All remedies refusing;
A plant that most with cutting grows,
Most barren with best using.
Why so?
More we enjoy it, more it dies;
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries
Heigh-ho!
Love is a torment of the mind,
A tempest everlasting;
And Jove hath made it of a kind,
Not well, nor full, nor fasting.
Why so?
More we enjoy it, more it dies;
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries
Heigh-ho!

SAMUEL DANIEL

MICHAEL DRAYTON
1563-1631

Since There's No Help

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part!
Nay, I have done; you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so clearly I myself can free.
Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again
Be it not seen, on either of our brows,
That we one jot of former love retain.

Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes;
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

MICHAEL DRAYTON

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
1564-1616

Sonnets

¶

Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?
Thou art more louely and more temperate:
Rough windes do shake the darling buds of Maie,
And Sommers lease hath all too short a date:
Sometimes too hot the eye of heauen shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And euery faire from faire some-time declines,
By chance, or natures changing course vntrim'd:
But thy eternall Sommer shall not fade,
Nor loose possession of that faire thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wandr'st in his shade,
When in eternall lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breath or eyes can see,
So long liues this, and this giues life to thee.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

¶

When in disgrace with Fortune and mens eyes,
I all alone beweepe my out-cast state,
And trouble deafe heauen with my bootlesse cries,
And looke vpon my selfe and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possest,
Desiring this mans art, and that mans skope,
With what I most inioy contented least,
Yet in these thoughts my selfe almost despising,
Haplye I thinke on thee, and then my state,
(Like to the Larke at breake of daye arising)
From sullen earth sings himns at Heauens gate,
For thy sweet loue remembred such welth brings,
That then I skorne to change my state with Kings.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

5

Being your slaue what should I doe but tend,
Vpon the houres, and times of your desire?
I haue no precious time at al to spend;
Nor seruices to doe til you require.
Nor dare I chide the world without end houre,
Whilst I (my soueraine) watch the clock for you,
Nor thinke the bitternesse of absence sowre,
When you haue bid your seruant once adieue.
Nor dare I question with my idealious thought,
Where you may be, or your affaires suppose,
But like a sad slaue stay and thinke of nought
Saue, where you are, how happy you make those.
So true a foole is loue, that in your Will,
(Though you doe any think) he thinkes no ill.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

5

That time of yeare thou maist in me behold,
When yellow leaues, or none, or few doe hange
Vpon those boughes which shake against the could,
Bare ruin'd quiers, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twi-light of such day,
As after Sun-set fadeth in the West,
Which by and by blacke night doth take away,
Deaths second selfe that seals vp all in rest.

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lye,
As on the death bed, whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nurrisht by.
This thou perceu'st, which makes thy loue more strong,
To loue that well, which thou must leaue ere long.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

¶

Let me not to the marriage of true mindes.
Admit impediments, loue is not loue
Which alters when it alteration findes,
Or bends with the remouer to remoue.
O no, it is an euer fixed marke
That lookes on tempests and is neuer shaken;
It is the star to euery wandring barke,
Whose worths vnknowne, although his higth be taken.
Lou's not Times foole, though roisie lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickles compass come,
Loue alters not with his breefe houres and weekes,
But beares it out euen to the edge of doome:
If this be error and vpon me proued,
I neuer writ, nor no man euer loued.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

¶

Th' expense of Spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action, and till action, lust
Is periurd, murdrous, blouddy, full of blame,
Sauage, extreame, rude, cruell, not to trust,
Inioyd no sooner but dispised straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
Past reason hated as a swollowed bayt,
On purpose layd to make the taker mad.
Madde in pursuit and in possession so,
Had, hauing, and in quest to haue, extreame,
A bliss in proofe and proud a very wo,
Before a ioy proposd behind a dreame.

All this the world well knowes yet none knowes well,
To shun the heauen that leads men to this hell.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

¶

Loe as a careful huswife runnes to catch,
One of her fethered creatures broake away,
Sets downe her babe and makes all swift dispatch
In pursuit of the thing she would haue stay:
Whilst here neglected child holds her in chace,
Cries to catch her whose busie care is bent,
To follow that which flies before her face:
Not prizing her poore infants discontent;
So runst thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I thy babe chace thee a farre behind,
But if thou catch thy hope turne back to me:
And play the mothers part, kisse me, be kind.
So will I pray that thou maist haue thy *Will*
If thou turne back and my loude crying still.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

¶

Poore soule the center of my sinful earth,
My sinful earth these rebbell powres that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth
Painting thy outward walls so costlie gay?
Why so large cost hauing so short a lease,
Dost thou vpon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall wormes inheritors of this excesse
Eat vp thy charge? Is this thy bodies end?
Then soule liue thou vpon thy seruants losse,
And let that pine to aggrauat thy store;
Buy tearmes diuine in selling houres of drosse:
Within be fed, without be rich no more,
So shall thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
And death once dead, ther's no more dying then.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun

Fear no more the heat o' the sun
  Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
  Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As Chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;
  Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
  To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
  Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
  Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
  And renowned be thy grave!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

JOHN DONNE
1573-1631

Womans Constancy

Now thou hast lov'd me one whole day,
To morrow when thou leav'st what wilt thou say?

Wilt thou then Antedate some new made vow?
Or say that now
We are not just those persons, which we were?
Or, that oathes made in reverentiall feare
Of Love, and his wrath, any may forsweare?
Or, as true deaths, true maryages untie,
So lovers contracts, images of those,
Binde but till sleep, deaths image, them unloose?
Or, your owne end to Justifie,
For having purpos'd change, and falsehood; you
Can have no way but falsehood to be true?
Vaine lunatique, against these scapes I could
Dispute, and conquer, if I would,
Which I abstaine to doe,
For by to morrow, I may thinke so too.

JOHN DONNE

The Undertaking

I HAVE done one braver thing
Then all the *Worthies* did,
And yet a braver thence doth spring,
Which is, to keepe that hid.

It were but madness now t' impart
The skill of specular stone,
When he which can have learn'd the art
To cut it, can finde none.

So, if I now should utter this,
Others (because no more
Such stuffs to worke upon, there is,)
Would love but as before.

But he who lovelinesse within
Hath found, all outward loathes,
For he who colour loves, and skinne,
Loves but their oldest clothes.

If, as I have, you also doe
Vertue' attir'd in woman see,
And dare love that, and say so too,
And forget the Hee and Shee;

And if this love, though placed so,
From prophane men you hide,
Which will no faith on this bestow,
Or, if they doe, deride:

Then you have done a braver thing
Then all the *Worthies* did;
And a braver thence will spring,
Which is, to keepe that hid.

JOHN DONNE

The Sunne Rising

Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windowes, and through curtaines call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers seasons run?
Sawcy pedantique wretch, goe chide
Late schoole boyes, and sowre prentices,
Goe tell Court-huntsmen, that the King will ride,
Call countrey ants to harvest offices;
Love, all alike, no season knowes, nor clyme,
Nor houres, dayes, moneths, which are the rags of time.

Thy beames, so reverend, and strong
Why shouldst thou thinke?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a winke,
But that I would not lose her sight so long:
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Looke, and to morrow late, tell mee,
Whether both the India's of spice and Myne
Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with mee.
Aske for those Kings whom thou saw'st yestreday,
And thou shalt heare, All here in one bed lay.

She' is all States, and all Princess, I,
Nothing else is.
Princess doe but play us; compar'd to this,
All honor's mimique; All wealth alchimie.
Thou sunne art halfe as happy' as wee,
In that the world's contracted thus;
Thine age askes ease, and since thy duties bee
To warme the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art every where;
This bed thy center is, these walls, thy spheare.

JOHN DONNE

The Triple Foole

I AM two fooles, I know,
For loving, and for saying so
In whining Poëtry;
But where's that wiseman, that would not be I,
If she would not deny?
Then as th' earths inward narrow crooked lanes
Do purge sea waters fretful salt away,
I thought, if I could draw my paines,
Through Rimes vexation, I should them allay,
Griefe brought to numbers cannot be so fierce,
For, he tames it, that fetters it in verse.

But when I have done so,
Some man, his art and voice to show,
Doth Set and sing my paine,
And, by delighting many, frees againe
Griefe, which verse did restraine.
To Love, and Griefe tribute of Verse belongs,
But not of such as pleases when 'tis read,
Both are increased by such songs:
For both their triumphs so are published,
And I, which was two fooles, do grow three;
Who are a little wise, the best fooles bee.

JOHN DONNE

Lovers Infinitenesse

If yet I have not all thy love,
Deare, I shall never have it all,
I cannot breath one other sigh, to move,
Nor can intreat one other teare to fall,
And all my treasure, which should purchase thee,
Sighs, tears, and oathes, and letters I have spent.
Yet no more can be due to mee,
Then at the bargaine made was meant,
If then thy gift of love were partiall,
That some to mee, some should to others fall,
Deare, I shall never have Thee All.

Or if then thou gavest mee all,
All was but All, which thou hadst then;
But if in thy heart, since, there be or shall,
New love created bee, by other men,
Which have their stocks intire, and can in tearse,
In sighs, in oathes, and letters outbid mee,
This new love may beget new feares,
For, this love was not vowed by thee.
And yet it was, thy gift being generall,
The ground, thy heart is mine, what ever shall
Grow there, dearie, I should have it all.

Yet I would not have all yet,
Hee that hath all can have no more,
And since my love doth every day admit
New growth, thou shouldst have new rewards in store;
Thou canst not every day give me thy heart,
If thou canst give it, then thou never gavest it:
Loves riddles are, that thou thy heart depart,
It stayes at home, and thou with losing savest it:
But wee will have a way more liberall,
Then changing hearts, to joyne, so wee shall
Be one, and one anothers All.

JOHN DONNE

Sweetest Love

Sweetest love, I do not goe,
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter Love for mee;
But since that I
Must dye at last, 'tis best,
To use my self in jest
Thus by fain'd deaths to dye;

Yesternight the Sunne went hence,
And yet is here to day,
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor halfe so short a way:
Then feare not mee,
But beleeve that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurres then hee.

O how feeble is mans power,
That if good fortune fall,
Cannot adde another houre,
Nor a lost houre recall!
But come bad chance,
And wee joyne to' it our strength,
And wee teach it art and length,
It selfe o'r us to'advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not winde,
But sigh'st my soule away,
When thou weep'st, unkindly kinde,
My lifes blood doth decay.
It cannot bee
That thou lov'st mee, as thou say'st,
If in thine my life thou waste,
Thou art the best of mee.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill,
Destiny may take thy part,
And may thy feares fulfill;
But thinke that wee
Are but turn'd aside to sleepe;
They who one another keepe
Alive, ne'r parted bee.

JOHN DONNE

A Feaver

Oh doe not die, for I shall hate
All women so, when thou art gone,
That thee I shall not celebrate,
When I remember, thou wast one.

And yet thou canst not die, I know;
To leave this world behinde, is death,
But when thou from this world wilt goe,
The whole world vapors with thy breath.

Or if, when thou, the worlds soule, goest,
It stay, 'tis but thy carkasse then,
The fairest women, but thy ghost,
But corrupt wormes, the worthyest men.

O wrangling schoole, that search what fire
Shall burne this world, had noe the wit
Unto this knowledge to aspire,
That this her feaver might be it?

And yet she cannot wast by this,
Nor long beare this torturing wrong,
For much corruption needful is
To fuell such a feaver long.

These burning fits but meteors bee,
  Whose matter in thee is soone spent.
Thy beauty, and all parts, which are thee,
  Are unchangeable firmament.

Yet t'was of my minde, seising thee,
  Though it in thee cannot persever.
For I had rather owner bee
  Of thee one houre, then all else ever.

JOHN DONNE

Breake of Day

'Tis true, 'tis day; what though it be?
O wilt thou therefore rise from me?
Why should we rise, because 'tis light?
Did we lie downe, because 'twas night?
Love which in spight of darkness brought us hether,
Should in despite of light keep us together.

Light has no tongue, but is all eye;
If it could speake as well as spie,
This were the worst, that it could say,
That being well, I faine would stay,
And that I lov'd my heart and honor so,
That I would not from him, that had them, goe.

Must businesse thee from hence remove?
Oh, that's the worst disease of love,
The poore, the foule, the false, love can
Admit, but not the busied man.
He which hath businesse, and makes love, doth doe
Such wrong, as when a maryed man doth wooe.

JOHN DONNE

Twicknam Garden

Blasted with sighs, and surrounded with tears,
Hither I come to seeke the spring,
And at mine eyes, and at mine eares,
Receive such balmes, as else cure every thing;
But O, selfe traytor, I do bring
The spider love, which transubstantiates all,
And can convert Manna to gall,
And that this place may thoroughly be thought
True Paradise, I have the serpent brought.

'Tweare wholsomer for me, that winter did
Benight the glory of this place,
And that a grave frost did forbid
These trees to laugh, and mocke mee to my face;
But that I may not this disgrace
Indure, nor yet leave loving, Love let mee
Some senslesse peece of this place bee;
Make me a mandrake, so I may groane here
Or a stone fountaine weeping out my yeare.

Hither with christall vyals, lovers come,
And take my teares, which are loves wine,
And try your mistresse Teares at home,
For all are false, that tast not just like mine;
Alas, hearts do not in eyes shine,
Nor can you more judge womans thoughts by teares,
Then by her shadow, what she weares.
O perverse sexe, where none is true but shee,
Who's therefore true, because her truth kills mee.

JOHN DONNE

Communitie

Good wee must love, and must hate ill,
For ill is ill, and good good still,
  But there are things indifferent,
Which wee may neither hate, nor love,
But one, and then another prove,
  As wee shall finde our fancy bent.

If then at first wise Nature had
Made women either good or bad,
  Then some wee might hate, and some chuse,
But since shee did them so create,
That wee may neither love, nor hate,
  Onely this rests, All, all my use.

If they were good it would be seene,
Good is as visible as greene,
  And to all eyes it selfe betrayes:
If they were bad, they could not last,
Bad doth it selfe, and others wast,
  So they deserve nor blame, nor praise.

But they are ours as fruits are ours,
He that but tasts, he that devours,
  And he that leaves all, doth as well:
Chang'd loves are but chang'd sorts of meat,
And when hee hath the kernell eate,
  Who doth not fling away the shell?

JOHN DONNE

Confined Love

Some man unworthy to be possessor
Of old or new love, himselfe being false or weake,
  Thought his paine and shame would be lesser,
If on womankinde he might his anger wreake,
  And thence a law did grow,
  One might but one man know;
  But are other creatures so?

Are Sunne, Moone, or Starres by law forbidden,
To smile where they list, or lend away their light?
Are birds divorced, or are they chidden
If they leave their mate, or lie abroad a night?
Beasts doe no joyntures lose
Though they new lovers choose,
But we are made worse than those.

Who e'r rigg'd faire shipe to lie in harbors,
And not to seeke new lands, or not to deale withall?
Or built faire houses, set trees, and arbors,
Only to lock up, or else to let them fall?
Good is not good, unlesse
A thousand it possesse,
But doth wast with greedinesse.

JOHN DONNE

A Valediction: of Weeping

Let me powre forth
My tears before thy face, whil'st I stay here,
For thy face coins them, and thy stampe they beare,
And by this Mintage they are something worth,
For thus they bee
Pregnant of thee;
Fruits of much griefe they are, emblemes of more,
When a teare falls, that thou falst which it bore,
So thou and I are nothing then, when on a diverse shore.

On a round ball
A workeman that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afrique, and an Asia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, *All*,
So doth each teare,
Which thee doth weare,

A globe, yea world by that impression grow,
Till thy tears mixt with mine doe overflow
This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven
dissolved so.

O more then Moone,
Draw not up seas to drowne me in thy spheare,
Weepe me not dead, in thine armes, but forbeare
To teach the sea, what it may doe too soone;
Let not the winde
Example finde,
To doe me more harme, then it purposeth;
Since thou and I sigh one anothers breath,
Who e'r sighs most, is cruellest, and hasts the others
death.

JOHN DONNE

The Flea

Marke but this flea, and marke in this,
How little that which thou deny'st me is;
It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea, our two bloods mingled bee;
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sinne, nor shame, nor losse of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoyes before it wooe,
And pamper'd swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more then wee would doe.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where wee almost, yea more then maryed are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,
And cloysterd in these living walls of Jet.
Though use make you apt to kill mee,
Let not to that, selfe murder added bee,
And sacrilege, three sinners in killing three.

Cruell and sodaine, hast thou since
Purpled thy naile, in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty bee,
Except in that drop which it suckt from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and saist that thou
Find'st not thy selfe, nor mee the weaker now;
'Tis true, then learne how false feares bee;
Just so much honor, when thou yeeld'st to mee,
Will wast, as this flea's death tooke life from thee.

JOHN DONNE

The Apparition

When by thy scorne, O murdresse, I am dead,
And that thou thinkst thee free
From all solicitation from mee,
Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,
And thee, fain'd vestall, in worse armes shall see;
Then thy sicke taper will begin to winke,
And he, whose thou art then, being tyr'd before,
Will, if thou stirre, or pinch to wake him, thinke
Thou call'st for more,
And in false sleepe will from thee shrinke,
And then poore Aspen wretch, neglected thou
Bath'd in a cold quicksilver sweat wilt lye
A veryer ghost then I;
What I will say, I will not tell thee now,
Lest that preserve thee'; and since my love is spent,
I' had rather thou shouldst painfully repent,
Then by my threatnings rest still innocent.

JOHN DONNE

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

As virtuous men passe mildly away,
And whisper to their soules, to goe,
Whilst some of their sad friends doe say,
The breath goes now, and some say, no:

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No teare-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
T'were prophanation of our joys
To tell the layetie our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harmes and fears,
Men reckon what it did and meant,
But trepidation of the spheares,
Though greater farre, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers love
(Whose soule is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love, so much refin'd,
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse.

Our two soules therefore, which are one,
Though I must goe, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate.

If they be, they are two so
As stiffe twin compasses are two,
Thy soule the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th' other doe.

And though it in the center fit,
Yet when the other far doth rome,
It leanes, and hearkens after it,
And growes erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to mee, who must
Like th' other foot, obliquely runne;
Thy firmnes makes my circle just,
And makes me end, where I begunne.

JOHN DONNE

The Extasie

WHERE, like a pillow on a bed,
A Pregnant banke swell'd up, to rest
The violets reclining head,
Sat we two, one anothers best.

Our hands were firmly cimented
By a fast balme which thence did spring,
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
Our eyes upon one double string;

So to' entergraft our hands, as yet
Was all the meanes to make us one;
And pictures in our eyes to get
Was all our propagation.

As 'twixt two equal Armies, Fate
Suspends uncertaine victorie,
Our soules, (which to advance their state
Were gone out,) hung 'twixt her and mee.

And whil'st our soules negotiate there,
Wee like sepulchrall statues lay;
All day, the same our postures were,
And we said nothing, all the day.

If any, so by love refin'd,
That the soules language understood,
And by good love were growen all minde,
Within convenient distance stood.

He, (though he knew not which soule spake,
Because both meant, both spake the same)
Might thence a new concoction take,
And part farre purer than he came.

This extasie doth unperplex
(We said) and tell us what we love,
We see by this, it was not sexe,
Wee, see, we saw not, what did move;

But as all severall soules containe
Mixture of things, they know not what,
Love these mixt soules doth mix againe,
And makes both one, each this and that.

A single violet transplant,
The strength, the colour, and the size,
(All which before was poore and scant,)
Redoubles still, and multiplies.

When love, with one another so
Interinanimates two soules,
That abler soule, which thence doth flow,
Defects of lonelinesse controules.

Wee then, who are this new soule, know,
Of what we are compos'd, and made,
For th' Atomies of which we grow,
Are soules, whom no change can invade.

But, O alas! so long, sa farre
Our bodies why do we forebeare?
They are ours, though they are not wee, Wee are
The intellegences, they the spheare.

We owe them thankes, because they thus
Did us, to us, at first convey,
Yeelded their forces, sense, to us,
Nor are drosse to us, but allay.

On man' heavens influence workes not so,
But that it first imprints the ayre,
Soe soule into the soule may flow,
Though it to body first repaire.

As our blood labours to beget
Spirits, as like soules as it can;
Because such fingers need to knit
That subtile knot, which makes us man.

So must pure lovers souls descend
To affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend,
Else a great Prince in prison lies.

To our bodies turne wee then, that so
Weake men on love reveal'd may looke;
Loves mysteries in soules doe grow,
But yet the body is his booke.

And if some lover, such as wee,
Have heard this dialogue of one,
Let him still marke us, he shall see
Small change, when we are to bodies gone.

JOHN DONNE

Loves Diet

To WHAT a combersome unwieldinesse
And burdenous corpulence my love had growne,
But that I did, to make it lesse,
And keepe it in proportion,
Give it a diet, made it feed upon
That which love worst endures, *discretion*.

Above one sigh a day I 'allow'd him not,
Of which my fortune, and my faults had part;
And if sometimes by stealth he got
A' she sigh from my mistresse heart,
And thought to feast on that, I let him see
'Twas neither very sound, nor meant to mee.

If he wroung from mee' a teare, I brin'd it so
With scorne or shame, that him it nourish'd not;
If he suck'd hers, I let him know
'Twas not a teare, Which hee had got,
His drinke was counterfeit, as was his meat;
For, eyes which rowle towards all, weepe not, but sweat.

What ever he would dictate, I writ that,
But burnt my letters: When she writ to me,
And that favour made him fat,
I said, if any title bee
Convey'd by this, Ah, what doth it availe,
To be the fortieth name in an entaile?

Thus I reclaim'd my buzard love fro flye
At what, and when, and how, and where I chuse;
Now negligent of sport I lye,
And now as other Fawkners use,
I spring a mistresse, swear, write, sigh and weep;
And the game kill'd, or lost, goe talke, and sleepe.

JOHN DONNE

The Funerall

Who ever comes to shroud me, do not harme
Nor question much
That subtile wreath of haire, which crowns my arme;
The mystery, the sign you must not touch,
For 'tis my outward Soule,
Viceroy to that, which then to heaven being gone,
Will leave this to controule,
And keepe these limbes, her Provinces, from dissolution.

For if the sinewie thread my braine lets fall
Through every part,
Can tye those parts, and make mee one of all;
These haires which upward grew, and strength and art
Have from a better braine,
Can better do' it; Except she meant that I
By this should know my pain,
As prisoners then are manacled, when they are condemn'd to die.

What ere shee meant by it, bury it with me,
For since I am
Loves martyr, it might breed idolatrie,
If into others hands these Reliques came;
As 'twas humility
To afford to it all that a Soule can doe,
So, 'tis some bravery,
That since you would save none of mee, I bury some of you.

JOHN DONNE

The Expiration

So, so, BREAKE off this last lamenting kisse,
Which sucks two soules, and vapors Both away,
Turne thou ghost that way, and let mee turne this,
And let our selves benight our happiest day,
We ask'd none leave to love; nor will we owe
Any, so cheape a death, as saying, Goe;

Goe; and if that word have not quite kil'd thee,
Ease mee with death, by bidding mee goe too.
And a just office on a murderer doe.
Except it be too late, kill me so,
Being double dead, going, and bidding, goe.

JOHN DONNE

Change

ALTHOUGH thy hand and faith, and good workes too,
Have seal'd thy love which nothing should undoe,
Yet though thou fall backe, that apostasie
Confirme thy love; yet much, much I feare thee.
Women are like the Arts, forc'd unto none,
Open to all searchers, unpriz'd, if unknowne.
If I have caught a bird, and let him flie,
Another fouler using these meanes, as I,
May catch the same bird; and, as these bee,
Women are made for men, not him, nor mee.
Foxes and goats; all beasts change when they please,
Shall women, more hot, wily, wild then these,
Be bound to one man, and did nature then
Idly make them apter to endure then men?
They are our clogges, not their owne; if a man bee
Chain'd to a galley, yet the galley is free;
Who hath a plow-land, casts all his seed corne there,
And yet allowes his ground more corne should beare;
Though Danuby into the sea must flow,
The sea receives the Rhene, Volga, and Po.
By nature, which gave it, this liberty
Thou lov'st, but Oh! canst thou love it and mee?
Likenesse glues love: and if that thou so doe,
To make us like and love, must I change too?
More than thy hate, I hate it, rather let mee
Allow her change, then change as oft as shee,
And soe not teach, but force my opinion
To love not any one, nor every one.
To live in one land, is captivitie,
Waters stinke soone, if in one place they bide,
And in the vast sea are more putrifi'd:
But when they kisse one banke, and leaving this
Then are they purest; Change is the nursery
Of musicke, joy, life, and eternity.

JOHN DONNE

By our first strange and fatal interview,
By all desires which thereof did ensue,
By our long starving hopes, by that remorse
Which my words masculine perswasive force
Begot in thee, and by the memory
Of hurts, which spies and rivals threatened me,
I calmly beg: But by thy fathers wrath,
By all pains, which want and divorcement hath,
I conjure thee, and all the oathes which I
And thou have sworne to seal joynt constancy,
Here I unsweare, and oversweare them thus,
Thou shall not love by ways so dangerous.
Temper, ô fair Love, loves impetuous rage,
Be my true Mistris still, not my faign'd Page;
I'll goe, and, by thy kind leave, leave behinde
Thee, onely worthy to nurse in my minde,
Thirst to come backe; ô if thou die before,
My soule from other lands to thee shall soare.
Thy (else Almighty) beautie cannot move
Rage from the Seas, nor thy love teach them love,
Nor tame wilde Boreas harshnesse; Thou hast reade
How roughly hee in peeces shivered
Fair Orithea whom he swore he loved.
Fall ill or good, 'tis madness to have proved
Dangers unurg'd; Feed on this flattery,
That absent Lovers one in th' other be.
Dissemble nothing, not a boy, nor change
Thy bodies habite, nor mindes; bee not strange
To thy selfe onely; All will spie in thy face
A blushing womanly discovering grace;
Richly cloth'd Apes, are call'd Apes, and as soone
Eclips'd as bright we call the Moone the Moone.
Men of France, changeable Camelions,
Spittles of diseases, shops of fashions,
Loves fuellers, and the rightest company
Of players, which upon the worlds stage be,

Will quickly know thee, and no less, alas!
Th' indifferent Italian, as we passe
His warme land, well content to thinke thee Page,
Will hunt thee with such lust, and hideous rage,
As *Lots* fair guests were vext. But none of these
Nor spungy hydroptique Dutch shall thee displease,
If thou stay here. O stay here, for, for thee
England is onely a worthy Gallerie,
To walk in expectation, till from hence
Our greatest King call thee to his presence.
When I am gone, dreame me some happinesse,
Nor let thy lookes our long hid love confesse
Nor praise, nor dispraise me, nor blesse nor curse
Openly loves force, nor in bed fright thy Nurse
With midnights startings crying out, oh, oh
Nurse, ô my love is slaine, I saw him goe
O'r the white Alpes alone: I saw him I,
Assail'd, fight, taken, stabb'd, bleed, fall, and die.
Augure me better chance, except dread *Love*
Thinke it enough for me to' have had thy love.

JOHN DONNE

Going to Bed

Come Madam come, all rest my powers defie,
Until I labour, I in labour lie.
The foe oft-times having the foe in sight,
Is tir'd with standing though he never fight.
Off with that girdle, like heavens Zone glittering,
But a far fairer world incompassing.
Unpin that spangled breastplate which you wear,
That th' eyes of busie fooles may be stopt there.
Unlace your self, for that harmonious chyme,
Tells me from you, that now it is bed time.
Off with that happy busk, which I envie,
That still can be, and still can stand so nigh.

Your gown going off, such beautious state reveals,
As when from flowery meads th' Hills shadow steales.
Off with that wyerie Coronet and shew
The haiery Diademe which on you doth grow:
Now off with those shoes, and then safely tread
In this loves hallow'd temple, this soft bed.
In such white robes, heaven's Angels us'd to be
Receaved by men; Thou Angel bringst with thee
A heaven like Mahomets Paradise; and though
Ill spirits walk in white, we easly know
By this these Angels from an evil sprite,
Those set our hairs, but these our flesh upright.
Licence my roaving hands, and let them go,
Before, behind, between, above, below.
O my America! my new-found-land,
My kingdom, safliest when with one man man'd
My Myne of precious stones, My Emperie,
How blest am I in this discovering thee!
To enter in these bonds, is to be free;
Then where my hand is set, my seal shall be.
Full nakedness! All joyes are due to thee,
As souls unbodied, bodies unclothed must be,
To taste whole joyes, Gems which you women use
Are like Atlanta's balls, cast in mens views,
That when a fools eye lighteth on a Gem,
His earthly soul may covet theirs, not them.
Like pictures, or like books gay coverings made
For lay-men, are all women thus array'd;
Themselves are mystick books, which only wee
(Whom their imputed grace will dignifie)
Must see reveal'd. Then since that I may know;
As liberally, as to a Midwife, shew
Thy self: cast all, yea, this white lynnen hence,
There is no pennance due to innocence.
To teach thee, I am naked first; why than
What needst thou have more covering then a man.

JOHN DONNE

Loves Warre

HERE let mee warr; in these armes lett mee lye;
Here lett mee parlee, batter, bleede, and die.
Thyne armes imprison me, and myne armes thee;
Thy heart thy ransome is; take myne for mee.
Other men war that they their rest may gayne;
But wee will rest that wee may fight agayne.
Those warrs the ignorant, these th' experienc'd love,
There wee are always under, here above.
There Engins farr off breed a just true feare,
Neere thrusts, pikes, stabs, yea bullets hurt not here.
There lyes are wrongs; here safe uprightly lye;
There men kill men, we will make one by and by.
Thou nothing; I not halfe so much shall do
In these Warrs, as they may which from us two
Shall spring. Thousands wee see which travaile not
To warrs; But stay swords, armes, and shott
To make at home; And shall not I do then
More glorious service, staying to make men?

JOHN DONNE

Batter My Heart

BATTER my heart, three person'd God; for, you
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee',and bend
Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new.
I, like an usurpt towne, to'another due,
Labour to'admit you, but Oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weake or untrue.
Yet dearely 'I love you,' and would be loved faine,
But am betroth'd unto your enemie;
Divorce mee, untie, or breake that knot againe;
Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I
Except you'enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chast, except you ravish mee.

JOHN DONNE

A Hymne to God the Father

Wilt thou forgive that sinn, where I begunn,
Which is my sinn, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive those sinns through which I runn,
And doe run still, though still I doe deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For, I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin, by which I have wonne
Others to sinn, and made my sinn their dore?
Wilt thou forgive that sinn which I did shunne
A yeare or twoe, but wallowed in a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For, I have more.

I have a sinn of feare that when I have spunn
My last thred, I shall perish on the shore;
Sweare by thy self that at my Death, thy Sunne
Shall shine as it shines nowe, & heretofore;
And having done that, thou hast done,
I have no more.

JOHN DONNE

BEN JONSON
1573-1637

Vivamus, Mea Lesbia

Come, my Celia, let us prove,
While we can, the sports of love,
Time will not be ours for ever,
He, at length, our good will sever;
Spend not then his gifts in vain:
Suns that set may rise again;
But if once we lose this light,
'Tis with us perpetual night.

Why should we defer our joys?
Fame and rumour are but toys.
Cannot we delude the eyes
Of a few poor household spies?
Or his easier ears beguile,
Thus removed by our wile?
'Tis no sin love's fruits to steal,
But the sweet thefts to reveal;
To be taken, to be seen,
These have crimes accounted been.

BEN JONSON

To a Weak Gamester in Poetry

With thy small stock, why art thou venturing still
At this so subtle sport, and playest so ill?
Thinkest thou it is mere Fortune, that can win,
Or thy rank setting that thou darest put in
Thy all, at all; and whatsoere I do,
Art still at that and thinkst to blow me up, too?
I cannot for the stage a drama lay
Tragic or comic; but thou writest the play.
I leave thee there and give away, intend
An epic poem: thou hast the same end.
I modestly quit that and think to write
Next morn, an ode: thou makest a song ere night.
I pass to elegies: thou meetest me there,
To satires: and thou dost pursue me. Where
Where shall I escape thee? In an epigram?
O, (thou cry'st out) that is my proper game.
Troth, if it be, I pity thy ill luck;
That both for wit and sense so oft doth pluck,
And never art encountered. I confess;
Nor scarse dost color for it, which is less.
Prithee, yet save thy rest; give o'er in time
There's no vexation that can make thee prime.

BEN JONSON

THOMAS DEKKER
1575-1641

Sweet Content

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O, sweet content!
Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?
O, punishment!
Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed
To add to golden numbers golden numbers?
O, sweet content! O, sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
Honest labour bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny, hey nonny, nonny!

Canst drink the waters of the crisped spring?
O, sweet content!
Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears?
O, punishment!
Then he that patiently want's burden bears,
No burden bears, but is a king, a king!
O, sweet content! O, sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
Honest labour bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny, hey nonny, nonny!

THOMAS DEKKER

JOHN WEBSTER
1580-1625

Dirge from 'The Duchess of Malfi'

Hark! Now everything is still,
The screech-owl and the whistler shrill,
Call upon our dame aloud,
And bid her quickly don her shroud!

Much you had of land and rent;
Your length in clay's now competent:
A long war disturb'd your mind;
Here your perfect peace is sign'd.
Of what is't fools make such vain keeping?
Sin their conception, their birth weeping,
Their life a general mist of error,
Their death a hideous storm of terror.
Strew your hair with powders sweet,
Don clean linen, bathe your feet,
And—the foul fiend more to check—
A crucifix let bless your neck:
'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day;
End your groan, and come away.

JOHN WEBSTER

Song from 'The Devil's Law-Case'

All the flowers of the spring
Meet to perfume our burying;
These have but their growing prime,
And man does flourish but his time.
Survey our progress from our birth;
We're set, we grow, we turn to earth,
Courts adieu, and all delights!
All bewitching appetites!
Sweetest breath and clearest eye,
Like perfumes, go out and die;
And consequently this is done
As shadows wait upon the sun.
Vain the ambition of kings
Who seek by trophies and dead things
To leave a living name behind,
And weave but nets to catch the wind.

JOHN WEBSTER

WILLIAM DRUMMOND
1585-1649

This Life

THIS Life, which seems so fair,
Is like a bubble blown up in the air
By sporting children's breath,
Who chase it everywhere
And strive who can most motion it bequeath.
And though it sometimes seem of its own might
Like to an eye of gold to be fix'd there,
And firm to hover in that empty height,
That only is because it is so light.
—But in that pomp it doth not long appear;
For when 'tis most admired, in a thought,
Because it erst was nought, it turns to nought.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND

GEORGE WITHER
1588-1667

The Manly Heart

SHALL I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day
Or the flowery meads in May—
If she think not well of me
What care I how fair she be?

Shall my silly heart be pined
'Cause I see a woman kind;
Or a well disposed nature
Joinéd with a lovely feature?
Be she meeker, kinder than
Turtle-dove or pelican,
If she be not so to me
What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her well-deservings known
Make me quite forget mine own?
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may merit name of Best;
If she be not such to me,
What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high,
Shall I play the fool and die?
She that bears a noble mind
If not outward helps she find,
Thinks what with them he would do
Who without them dares her woo;
And unless that mind I see,
What care I how great she be?

Great or good, or kind or fair,
I will ne-er the more despair;
If she love me, this believe,
I will die ere she shall grieve;
If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn and let her go;
For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be?

GEORGE WITHER

THOMAS CAREW
1589-1639

Mediocrity in Love Rejected

Give me more Love, or more Disdain;
The Torrid, or the Frozen Zone
Bring equall ease unto my paine;
The Temperate affords me none:
Either extreme of Love or Hate.
Is sweeter than a calme estate.

Give me a storme; if it be Love,
Like *Danae* in that golden showre
I swim in pleasure; if it prove
Disdain, that Torrent will devour
My Vulture-hopes; and he's possest
Of Heaven, that's but from Hell releast:
Then crown my joyes, or cure my pain;
Give me more Love, or more Disdain.

THOMAS CAREW

ROBERT HERRICK
1591-1674

His Winding-Sheet

Come thou, who art the Wine and wit
Of all I've writ:
The Grace, the Glory, and the best
Piece of the rest.
Thou art of what I did intend
The All and End.
And what was made, was made to meet
Thee, thee my sheet.
Come then, and be to my chaste side
Both Bed and Bride.
We two (as Relics left) will have

One Rest, one Grave.
And, hugging close, we will not fear
Lust entering here:
Where all Desires are dead, or cold
As is the mould:
And all Affections are forgot,
Or trouble not.
Here, here the Slaves and Prisoners be
From Shakles free:
And Weeping Widows long oppressed
Do here find rest.
The wronged Client ends his Laws
Here, and his Cause.
Here those long suits of Chancery lie
Quiet, or die:
And all Star-chamber-Bills do cease,
Or hold their peace.
Here needs no Court for our Request,
Where all are best;
All wise; all equal; and all just
Alike i' th' dust.
Nor need we here to fear the frown
Of Court, or Crown.
Where Fortune bears no sway o'er things,
There all are Kings.
In this securer place we'll keep,
As lulled asleep;
Or for a little time we'll lie,
As Robes laid by;
To be another day re-worn,
Turned, but not torn:
Or like old Testaments ingrost,
Lock'd up, not lost:
And for a while lie here conceal'd;
To be reveal'd
Next, at that great Platonic year,
And then meet here.

ROBERT HERRICK

GEORGE HERBERT

1593-1632

Ana-{MARY / ARMY}*Gram*

How well her name an *Army* doth present,
In whom the *Lord of hosts* did pitch his tent!

GEORGE HERBERT

Vanity

The fleet Astronomer can bore
And thread the spheres with his quick-piercing mind:
He views their stations, walks from door to door,
Surveys, as if he had design'd
To make a purchase there: he sees their dances,
And knoweth long before,
Both their full-eyed aspects, and secret glances.

The nimble Diver with his side
Cuts through the working waves, that he may fetch
His dearly-earnéd pearl, which God did hide
On purpose from the vent'rous wretch;
That he might save his life, and also hers,
Who with excessive pride
Her own destruction and his danger wears.

The subtle Chymic can divest
And strip the creature naked, till he find
The callow principles within their nest:
There he imparts to them his mind,
Admitted to their bed-chamber, before
They appear trim and drest
To ordinary suitors at the door.

What hath not man sought out and found,
But his dear God? who yet his glorious law
Embosoms in us, mellowing the ground
With showers and frosts, with love and awe;
So that we need not say, Where's this command?
Poor man! thou searchest round
To find out *death*, but missest *life* at hand.

GEORGE HERBERT

Man

My God, I heard this day
That none doth build a stately habitation
But he that means to dwell therein.
What house more stately hath there been,
Or can, than is man, to whose creation
All things are in decay?

For man is every thing,
And more: he is a tree, yet bears no fruit;
A beast, yet is, or should be, more—
Reason and speech we only bring.
Parrots may thank us, if they are not mute—
They go upon the score.

Man is all symmetrie—
Full of proportions, one limb to another,
And all to all the world besides.
Each part may call the farthest brother;
For head with foot hath private amitie,
And both with moons and tides.

Nothing hath got so farre
But man hath caught and kept it as his prey.
His eyes dismount the highest starre;
He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Finde their acquaintance there.

For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow.
Nothing we see but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The starres have us to bed—
Night draws the curtain, which the sunne withdraws.
Musick and light attend our head;
All things unto our flesh are kinde
In their descent and being—to our minde
In their ascent and cause.

Each thing is full of dutie:
Waters united are our navigation—
Distinguished, our habitation;
Below, our drink—above, our meat;
Both are our cleanliness. Hath one such beautie?
Then how are all things neat!

More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of. In any path
He treads down that which doth befriend him
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
O mightie love! Man is one world and hath
Another to attend him.

Since then, my God, thou hast
So brave a palace built, oh dwell in it,
That it may dwell with thee at last!
Till then afford us so much wit
That, as the world serves us, we may serve thee,
And both thy servants be.

GEORGE HERBERT

The Storm

If as the winds and waters here below
Do fly and flow,
My sighs and tears as busy were above;
Sure they would move
And much affect thee, as tempestuous times
Amaze poor mortals, and object their crimes.

Stars have their storms, even in a high degree,
As well as we.
A throbbing conscience spurrèd by remorse
Hath a strange force:
It quits the earth, and mounting more and more,
Dares to assault thee, and besiege thy door.

There it stands knocking, to thy music's wrong,
And drowns the song.
Glory and honour are set by till it
An answer get.
Poets have wrong'd poor storms: such days are best;
They purge the air without, within the breast.

GEORGE HERBERT

The Collar

I struck the board, and cry'd, No more.
I will abroad.
What? shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the rode,
Loose as the winde, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me bloud, and not restore
What I have lost with cordiall fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did drie it: there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the yeare onely lost to me?
Have I no bayes to crown it?

No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted?
All wasted?
Not so, my heart: but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures: leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit, and not; forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which pettie thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away; take heed:
I will abroad.
Call in thy deaths head there: tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need,
Deserves his load.
But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling *Childe*:
And I reply'd, *My Lord*.

GEORGE HERBERT

Love

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.

'A guest,' I answered, 'worthy to be here':
Love said, 'You shall be he.'
'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear!
I cannot look on thee.'
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord; but I have marred them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.'
'And know you not,' says Love, 'who bore the blame?'
'My dear, then I will serve.'
'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
So I did sit and eat.

GEORGE HERBERT

JAMES SHIRLEY
1596-1666

Equality

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Scepter and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill;
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still:
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
While they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds:
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds!
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb:
Only actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

JAMES SHIRLEY

CHRISTOPHER HARVEY
1597-1663

The Circumcision, or New-Year's Day

Sorrow betide my sins! Must smart so soon
Seize on my Saviour's tender flesh scarce grown
Unto an eighth day's age?
Can nothing else assuage
The wrath of heaven, but his infant-blood?
Innocent Infant, infinitely good!

Is this thy welcome to the world, great God!
No sooner born, but subject to the rod
Of sin-incensèd wrath?
Alas! what pleasure hath
Thy Father's justice to begin thy passion,
Almost together with thine incarnation?

Is it to antedate thy death? to indite
Thy condemnation himself, and write
The copy with thy blood,
Since nothing is so good?
Oh, is't by this experiment to try,
Whether thou beest born mortal, and canst die?

If man must needs draw blood of God, yet why
Stays he not till thy time be come to die?
Didst thou thus early bleed
For us to show what need
We have to hasten unto thee as fast;
And learn that all the time is lost that's pass'd?

'Tis true, we should do so: Yet in this blood
There's something else, that must be understood;
It seals thy covenant,
That so we may not want
Witness enough against thee, that thou art
Made subject to the Law, to act our part.

The sacrament of thy regeneration
It cannot be; it gives no intimation
Of what thou wert, but we:
Native impurity;
Original corruption, was not thine,
But only as thy righteousness is mine.

In holy Baptism this is brought to me,
As that in Circumcision was to thee:
So that thy loss and pain
Do prove my joy and gain.
Thy Circumcision writ thy death in blood:
Baptism in water seals my livelihood.

O blessed change! Yet, rightly understood,
That blood was water, and this water's blood.
What shall I give again,
To recompense thy pain?
Lord, take revenge upon me for this smart:
To quit thy fore-skin, circumcise my heart.

CHRISTOPHER HARVEY

SIR THOMAS BROWNE
1605-1682

Religio Medici

Sleep is a death; O make me try,
By sleeping, what it is to die!
And as gently lay my head
On my grave as now my bed.

Howe'er I rest, Great God, let me
Awake again at last with Thee;
And thus assured, behold I lie
Securely, or to wake or die.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

JOHN MILTON
1608-1674

From 'Paradise Lost'

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning, how the Heavens and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: Or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd
Fast by the oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

JOHN MILTON

On His Blindness

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide;
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
Doth God exact day-labor, light denied,
I fondly ask? But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

JOHN MILTON

SAMUEL BUTLER
1612-1680

The Metaphysical Sectarian

He was in *Logick* a great Critick,
Profoundly skill'd in Analytick.
He could distinguish, and divide
A Hair 'twixt *South* and *South-West* side:
On either which he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute.
He'd undertake to prove by force
Of Argument, a Man's no Horse.
He'd prove a Buzzard is no Fowl,
And that a *Lord* may be an Owl:
A Calf an *Alderman*, a Goose a *Justice*,
And Rooks *Committee-men* and *Trustees*.
He'd run in Debt by Disputation,
And pay with Ratiocination.
All this by Syllogism, true
In Mood and Figure, he would do.

For *Rhetorick*, he could not ope
His mouth, but out there flew a Trope:
And when he hapned to break off
I'th middle of his speech, or cough,
H'had hard words, ready to shew why,
And tell what Rules he did it by.
Else when with greatest Art he spoke,
You'd think he talk'd like other folk.
For all A Rhetoricians Rules
Teach nothing but to name his Tools.
His ordinary Rate of Speech
In loftiness of sound was rich.
A *Babylonish* dialect,
Which learned Pedants much affect.
It was a parti-colour'd dress
Of patch'd and pyball'd Languages:

'Twas *English* cut on *Greek* and *Latin*,
Like Fustian heretofore on Sattin.
It had an odd promiscuous Tone,
As if h' had talk'd three parts in one.
Which made some think when he did gabble,
Th' had heard three Labourers of *Babel*;
Or *Gerberus* himself pronounce
A Leash of Languages at once.
This he as volubly would vent,
As if his stock would ne'r be spent.
And truly to support that charge
He had supplies as vast and large.
For he could coyn or counterfeit
New words with little or no wit:
Words so debas'd and hard, no stone
Was hard enough to touch them on.
And when with hasty noise he spoke 'em,
The Ignorant for currant took 'em,
That had the Orator who once
Did fill his Mouth with Pebble stones
When he harangu'd, but known his Phrase,
He would have us'd no other ways.

In *Mathematicks* he was greater
Then *Tycho Brahe*, or *Erra Pater:*
For he by *Geometrick* scale
Could take the size of *Pots of Ale*;
Resolve by Signes and Tangents straight,
If *Bread* or *Butter* wanted weight;
And wisely tell what hour o'th day

The Clock does strike, by *Algebra.*
Beside he was a shrewd *Philosopher*;
And had read every Text and gloss over:
What e're the crabbed'st Author hath
He understood b'implicit Faith,
What ever *Sceptick* could inquere for;
For every *why* he had a *wherefore*:

Knew more then forty of them do,
As far as words and terms could go.
All which he understood by Rote,
And as occasion serv'd, would quote;
No matter whether right or wrong:
They might be either said or sung.
His Notions fitted things so well,
That which was which he could not tell;
But oftentimes mistook the one
For th' other, as Great Clerks have done.
He could reduce all things to Acts
And knew their Natures by Abstracts,
Where Entity and Quiddity
The Ghosts of defunct Bodies flie;
Where Truth in Person does appear,
Like words congeal'd in Northern Air.
He knew *what's what*, and that's as high
As *Metaphysick* wit can fly.
In *School Divinity* as able
As he that hight *Irrefragable*;
Profound in all the Nominal
And real ways beyond them all,
And with as delicate a Hand
Could twist as tough a Rope of Sand,
And weave fine Cobwebs, fit for skull
That's empty when the Moon is full;
Such as take Lodgings in a Head
That's to be lett unfurnished.
He could raise Scruples dark and nice,
And after solve 'em in a trice:
As if Divinity had catch'd
The Itch, of purpose to be scratch'd;
Or, like a Mountebank, did wound
And stab her self with doubts profound,
Onely to shew with how small pain
The sores of faith are cur'd again;
Although by woeful proof we find,
They always leave a Scar behind.

He knew the Seat of Paradise,
Could tell in what degree it lies:
And, as he was dispos'd, could prove it,
Below the Moon, or else above it:
What *Adam* dreamt of when his Bride
Came from her Closet in his side:
Whether the Devil tempted her
By a *High Dutch* Interpreter:
If either of them had a Navel;
Who first made Musick malleable:
Whether the Serpent at the fall
Had cloven Feet, or none at all,
All this without a Gloss or Comment,
He would unriddle in a moment
In proper terms, such as men smatter
When they throw out and miss the matter.

SAMUEL BUTLER

Satire Upon the Weakness and Misery of Man

Our pains are real things, and all
Our pleasures but fantastical;
Diseases of their own accord,
But cures come difficult and hard.
Our noblest piles, and stateliest rooms,
Are but out-houses to our tombs;
Cities, though e'er so great and brave,
But mere warehouses to the grave.

SAMUEL BUTLER

RICHARD CRASHAW
1615-1652

Wishes
To his (supposed) Mistresse

Who ere she be,
That not impossible she
That shall command my heart and me;

Where ere she lye,
Lock't up from mortall Eye,
In shady leaves of Destiny;

Till that ripe Birth
Of studied fate stand forth,
And teach her faire steps to our Earth;

Till that Divine
Idea, take a shrine
Of Chrystall flesh, through which to shine;

Meet you her my wishes,
Bespeake her to my blisses
And be ye call'd my absent kisses.

I wish her Beauty,
That owes not all his Duty
To gaudy Tire, or glistring shoo-ty.

Something more than
Taffeta or Tissew can,
Or rampant feather, or rich fan.

More than the spoyle
Of shop, or silkewormes Toyle,
Or a bought blush, or a set smile.

A face thats best
By its owne beauty drest,
And can alone command the rest.

A face made up,
Out of no other shop
Than what natures white hand sets ope.

A cheeke where Youth,
And Blood, with Pen of Truth
Write, what the Reader sweetly ru'th.

A Cheeke where growes
More than a Morning Rose:
Which to no Boxe his being owes.

Lipps, where all Day
A lovers kisse may play,
Yet carry nothing thence away.

Lookes that oppresse
Their richest Tires, but dresse
And cloak their simplest Nakednesse.

Eyes, that displaces
The Neighbor Diamond, and out-faces
That sunshine, by their own sweet Graces.

Tresses, that weare
Jewells, but to declare
How much themselves more pretious are.

Whose native Ray,
Can tame the wanton Day
Of Gems, that in their bright shades play.

Each Ruby there,
Or Pearle that dare appeare,
Be its own blush, be its own Teare.

A well tam'd Heart,
For whose more noble smart,
Love may be long chusing a Dart.

Eyes, that bestow
Full quivers on loves Bow;
Yet pay lesse Arrowes than they owe.

Smiles, that can warme
The blood, yet teach a charme,
That Chastity shall take no harme.

Blushes, that bin
The burnish of no sin,
Nor flames of ought too hot within.

Joyes, that confesse,
Vertue their Mistresse,
And have no other head to dresse.

Feares, fond and slight,
As the coy Brides, when Night
First does the longing Lover right.

Teares, quickly fled,
And vaine, as those are shed
For a dying Maydenhead.

Dayes, that need borrow,
No part of their good Morrow,
From a fore spent night of sorrow.

Dayes, that in spight
Of Darkenesse, by the Light
Of a cleere mind are Day all Night,

Nights, sweet as they,
Made short by Lovers play,
Yet long by th' absence of the Day.

Life, that dares send
A challenge to this end,
And when it comes say *Welcome Friend.*

Sydnoean showers
Of sweet discourse, whose powers
Can crown old Winters head with flowers.

Soft silken Hours,
Open sunnes, shady Bowers;
'Bove all, Nothing within that lowers.

What ere Delight
Can make Dayes forehead bright,
Or give Downe to the Wings of Night.

In her whole frame,
Have Nature all the Name,
Art and ornament the shame.

Her flattery,
Picture and Poesy,
Her counsell her owne vertue be.

I wish, her store
Of worth may leave her poore
Of wishes; And I wish—No more.

Now if Time knowes
That her whose radiant Browes
Weave them a Garland of my vowes,

Her whose just Bayes,
My future hopes can raise,
A trophie to her present praise;

Her that dares be,
What these Lines wish to see:
I seeke no further, it is she.

'Tis she, and here
Lo I uncloath and cleare,
My wishes cloudy Character.

May she enjoy it,
Whose merit dare apply it,
But Modesty dares still deny it.

Such worth as this is
Shall fixe my flying wishes,
And determine them to kisses.

Let her full Glory,
My fancyes, fly before ye,
Be ye my fictions; But her story.

RICHARD CRASHAW

To the Noblest and Best of Ladyes, the Countesse of Denbigh

Perswading Her to Resolution in Religion

WHAT heav'n-interested Heart is This
Stands trembling at the gate of blisse;
Holds fast the door, yet dares not venture
Fairly to open it, and enter,
Whose DEFINITION is a Doubt
Twixt Life & Death, twixt In & Out.
Say, lingring fair! why comes the birth
Of your brave soul so slowly forth?
Plead your pretences (o you strong
In weakness!) why you choose so long
In labor of your selfe to ly,
Nor daring quite to live nor dy?
Ah linger not, lov'd soul! a slow
And late consent was a long No,
Who grants at last, a long time tryd
And did his best to have deny'd,
What magick bolts, what mystick Barres
Maintain the will in these strange warres!
What fatall, yet fantasick, bands
Keep The free Heart from it's own hands!
So when the year takes cold, we see
Poor waters their owne prisoners be,
Fetter'd, & lockt up fast they ly
In a sad selfe-captivity.
The' astonisht nymphs their flood's strange
fate deplore
To see themselves their own severer shore,
Thou that alone canst thaw this cold,

And fetch the heart from it's strong Hold;
Allmighty Love! end this long warr,
And of a meteor make a starr.
O fix this fair Indefinite.
And 'mongst thy shafts of soveraign light
Choose out that sure decisive dart
Which has the Key of this close heart,
Knowes all the corners of't, & can controul
The self-shutt cabinet of an unsearcht soul,
O let it be at last, love's houre.
Raise this tall Trophee of thy Powre;
Come once the conquering way; not to
confute
But kill this rebell-word, Irresolute
That so, in spite of all this peevish strength
Of weakness,, she may write Resolv'd
At Length,
Unfold at length, unfold fair flowre
And use the season of love's showre,
Meet his well-meaning Wounds, wise heart!
And hast to drink the wholesome dart.
That healing shaft, which heavn till now
Hath in love's quiver hid for you.
O Dart of love! arrow of light!
O happy you, if it hitt right,
It must not fall in vain, it must
Not mark the dry regardless dust.
Fair one, it is your fate; and brings
Æternall worlds upon it's wings.
Meet it with wide-spread armes; & see
Its seat your soul's just center be.
Disband dull feares; give faith the day.
To save your life, kill your delay.
It is love's seege; and sure to be
Your triumph, though his victory.
'Tis cowardise that keeps this feild
And want of courage not to yeild.
Yeild then, o yeild, that love may win

The Fort at last, and let life in.
Yeild quickly. Lest perhaps you prove
Death's prey, before the prize of love.
This Fort of your fair selfe, if't be not won,
He is repulst indeed; But you'are vndone.

RICHARD CRASHAW

SIR RICHARD LOVELACE
1618-1658

To Althea, from Prison

When Love with unconfinéd wings
  Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
  To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
  And fetter'd to her eye,
The Gods that wanton in the air
  Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
  With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses bound,
  Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
  When healths and draughts go free—
Fishes that tipple in the deep
  Know no such liberty.

When, (like committed linnets), I
  With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty
  And glories of my King;
When I shall voice aloud how good
  He is, how great should be,
Enlargéd winds, that curl the flood,
  Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

SIR RICHARD LOVELACE

ABRAHAM COWLEY
1618-1667

Destinie

Strange and *unnatural!* lets stay and see
This *Pageant* of a *Prodigie.*
Lo, of themselves th' enlivened *Chesmen* move,
Lo, the unbred, ill-organ'd *Pieces* prove,
As full of *Art,* and *Industrie,*
Of *Courage* and of *Policie,*
As *we our selves* who think ther's nothing *Wise* but *We.*
Here a proud *Pawn* I,' admire
That still advancing higher
At top of all became
Another *Thing* and *Name.*
Here I'm amaz'ed at th' actions of a Knight,
That does bold wonders in the fight.
Here I the losing party blame
For those false *Moves* that break the *Game,*
That to their *Grave* the *Bag,* the conquered *Pieces* bring,
And above all, th' *ill Conduct* of the *Mated King.*
What e're these *seem,* what e're *Philosophie*
And *Sense* or *Reason* tell (said I)

These Things have *Life*, *Election*, *Libertie*;
'Tis their own *Wisdom* molds their *State*,
Their *Faults* and *Virtues* make their Fate.
They do, they do (said I) but strait
Lo from my' enlightened Eyes the Mists and shadows [fell
That hinder *Spirits* from being *Visible*.
And, lo, I saw *two Angels* plaid the *Mate*.
With *Man*, alas, no otherwise it proves,
An *unseen Hand* makes all their *Moves*.
And some are *Great*, and some are *Small*,
Some climb to *good*, some from *good Fortune* fall,
Some *Wisemen*, and some *Fools* we call,
Figures, alas, of *Speech*, for *Desti'ny plays us all*.
Me from the *womb* the *Midwife Muse* did take:
She cut my *Navel*, *washt me*, and mine *Head*
With her own *Hands* she *Fashioned*;
She did a *Covenant* with me make,
And *circumcis'ed* my tender *Soul*, and thus she spake,
Thou of my *Church* shalt be,
Hate and *renounce* (said she)
Wealth, *Honor*, *Pleasures*, all the *World* for *Me*.
Thou neither great at *Court*, nor in the *War*,
Nor at th' *Exchange* shalt be, nor at the wrangling *Bar*.
Content thy self with the small *Barren Praise*,
That neglected *Verse* does raise.
She spake, and all my years to come
Took their unlucky *Doom*.
Their several ways of *Life* let others *chuse*,
Their several pleasures let them use,
But I was born for *Love*, and for a *Muse*.
With *Fate* what boots it to contend?
Such I *began*, such *am*, and so must *end*.
The *Star* that did my *Being* frame,
Was but a *Lambent Flame*,
And some small *Light* it did dispence,
But neither *Heat* nor *Influence*.
No Matter, *Cowley*, let proud *Fortune* see.
That *thou* canst *her* despise no less then *she* does *Thee*.

Let all her gifts the portion be
Of Folly, Lust, and Flattery,
Fraud, Extortion, Calumnie,
Murder, Infidelitie,
Rebellion and Hypocrisie.
Do Thou nor *grieve* nor *blush* to be,
As all th' inspired *tuneful Men*,
And all thy great *Forefathers* were from *Homer* down to *Ben*.

ABRAHAM COWLEY

Hymn to Light

First-born of Chaos, who so fair didst come
From the old Negro's darksome womb!
Which, when it saw the lovely child,
The melancholy mass put on kind looks and smil'd;

Thou tide of glory, which no rest dost know,
But ever ebb and ever flow!
Thou golden shower of a true Jove!
Who does in thee descend, and Heaven to Earth make love!

Hail, active Nature's watchful life and health
Her joy, her ornament, and wealth!
Hail to thy husband, Heat, and thee!
Thou the world's beauteous bride, the lusty bridegroom he!

Say from what golden quivers of the sky
Do all thy wingéd arrows fly?
Swiftness and Power by birth are thine:
From thy great sire they came, thy sire, the Word Divine.

Tis, I believe, this archery to show.
That so much cost in colors thou,
And skill in painting, dost bestow
Upon thy ancient arms, the gaudy heavenly bow.

Swift as light thoughts their empty career run,
Thy race is finish'd when begun;
Let a post-angel start with thee,
And thou the goal of Earth shalt reach as soon
as he.

Thou in the Moon's bright chariot, proud and gay,
Dost thy bright wood of stars survey!
And all the year dost with thee bring
Of thousand flowery lights thine own nocturnal
spring.

Thou, Scythian-like, dost round thy lands above
The Sun's gilt tents for ever move,
And still, as thou in pomp dost go,
The shining pageants of the world attend thy
show.

Nor amidst all these triumphs dost thou scorn
The humble glow-worms to adorn,
And with those living spangles gild
(O greatness without pride!) the bushes of the
field.

Night, and her ugly subjects, thou dost fright,
And Sleep, the lazy owl of night;
Asham'd, and fearful to appear,
They screen their horrid shapes with the black
hemisphere.

With them there hastes, and wildly takes th'
alarm,
Of painted dreams a busy swarm:
At the first opening of thine eye
The various clusters break, the antic atoms fly.

The guilty serpents, and obscener beasts,
Creep, conscious, to their secret rests:
Nature to thee does reverence pay,
Ill omens and ill sights removes out of thy way.

At thy appearance, Grief itself is said
To shake his wings, and rouse his head:
And cloudy Care has often took
A gentle beamy smile, reflected from thy look.

At thy appearance, Fear itself grows bold;
Thy sun-shine melts away his cold.
Encouraged at the sight of thee,
To the cheek color comes, and firmness to the knee.

Ev'n Lust, the master of a harden'd face,
Blushes, if thou be'st in the place,
To Darkness' curtains he retires;
In sympathizing night he rolls his smoky fires.

When, goddess! thou lift'st up thy waken'd head,
Out of the morning's purple bed,
Thy quire of birds about thee play,
And all the joyful world salutes the rising day.

The ghosts, and monster-spirits, that did presume
A body's privilege to assume,
Vanish again invisibly,
And bodies gain again their visibility.

All the world's bravery, that delights our eyes
Is but thy several liveries;
Thou the rich dye on them bestow'st,
Thy nimble pencil paints this landscape as thou go'st.

A crimson garment in the rose thou wear'st;
A crown of studded gold thou bear'st;
The virgin-lilies, in their white,
Are clad but with the lawn of almost naked light.

The violet, Spring's little infant, stands
  Girt in thy purple swaddling-bands.
  On the fair tulip thou dost doat;
Thou cloth'st it in a gay and party-color'd coat.

With flame condens'd thou do'st thy jewels fix
  And solid colors in it mix:
  Flora herself envies to see
Flowers fairer than her own, and durable as she.

Ah, goddess! would thou could'st thy hand
    withhold
  And be less liberal to gold!
  Did'st thou less value to it give,
Of how much care, alas! might'st thou poor man
    relieve!

To me the Sun is more delightful far,
  And all fair days much fairer are.
  But few, ah! wondrous few, there be,
Who do not gold prefer, O goddess! even to thee.

Through the soft ways of Heaven, and air, and
    sea
  Which open all their pores to thee,
  Like a clear river thou dost glide,
And with thy living stream through the close
    channels slide.

But, where firm bodies thy free course oppose,
  Gently thy source the land o'erflows,
  Takes there possession, and does make
Of colors mingled light, a thick and standing lake.

But the vast ocean of unbounded day,
  In th' empyrean Heaven does stay
  Thy rivers, lakes, and springs, below,
From thence took first their rise, thither at last
    must flow.

ABRAHAM COWLEY

ANDREW MARVELL
1620-1678

To His Coy Mistress

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges side
Should'st rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain, I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you would, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze:
Two hundred to adore each breast:
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should shew your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Time's wingéd chariot hurrying near:
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserv'd virginity:
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now, therefore, while the youthful hue

Sits on thy skin like morning dew
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our Time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapt power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life.
Thus, though we cannot make our Sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

ANDREW MARVELL

The Fair Singer

To make a final conquest of all me,
Love did compose so sweet an Enemy,
In whom both Beauties to my death agree,
Joyning themselves in fatal Harmony;
That while she with her Eyes my Heart does bind,
She with her Voice might captivate my Mind.

I could have fled from One but singly fair:
My dis-intangled Soul it self might save,
Breaking the curled trammels of her hair.
But how should I avoid to be her Slave,
Whose subtile Art invisibly can wreath
My Fetters of the very Air I breath?

It had been easie fighting in some plain,
Where Victory might hang in equal choice.
But all resistance against her is vain,
Who has th' advantage both of Eyes and Voice.
And all my Forces needs must be undone,
She having gained both the Wind and Sun.

ANDREW MARVELL

The Definition of Love

My love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis, for object, strange and high;
It was begotten by despair
Upon impossibility.

Magnanimous despair alone
Could show me so divine a thing,
Where feeble hope could ne'er have flown
But vainly flapped its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive
Where my extended soul is fixed;
But fate does iron wedges drive,
And always crowds itself betwixt.

For fate with jealous eyes does see
Two perfect loves, nor lets them close;
Their union would her ruin be,
And her tyrannic power depose.

And therefore her decrees of steel
Us as the distant poles have placed
(Though Love's whole world on us doth wheel),
Not by themselves to be embraced,

Unless the giddy heaven fall,
And earth some new convulsion tear,
And, us to join, the world should all
Be cramped into a planisphere.

As lines, so loves oblique may well
Themselves in every angle greet;
But ours, so truly parallel,
Though infinite, can never meet.

Therefore the love which us doth bind,
But fate so enviously debars,
Is the conjunction of the mind,
And opposition of the stars.

ANDREW MARVELL

Thoughts in a Garden

How vainly men themselves amaze
To win the palm, the oak, the bays,
And their incessant labours see
Crown'd from some single herb or tree,
Whose short and barrow-verged shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all the flowers and trees do close
To weave the garlands of repose!

Fair Quiet have I found thee here,
And Innocence thy sister dear?
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men;
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow;
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So amorous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name:
Little, alas! they know or heed
How far these beauties hers exceed!
Fair trees! wheres'e'er your barks I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passions' heat
Love hither makes his best retreat:
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race;
Apollo hunted Daphne so
Only that she might laurel grow;
And Pan did after Syrinx speed
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
Withdraws into its happiness;
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;
There' like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and combs its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy Garden-state
While man there walk'd without a mate:
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 'twere in one,
To live in Paradise alone.

How well the skillful gard'ner drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new!
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run:
And, as it works, th' industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckon'd, but with herbs and flowers!

ANDREW MARVELL

HENRY VAUGHAN
1621-1695

A Vision

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright:—
And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years
Driven by the spheres,
Like a vast shadow moved: in which the World
And all her train were hurl'd.

HENRY VAUGHAN

The Retreat

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my Angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walk'd above
A mile or two from my first love,

And looking back, at that short space
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshy dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track.
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence th' enlighten'd spirit sees
That shady City of palm trees!
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way:—
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

HENRY VAUGHAN

Man

Weighing the stedfastness and state
Of some mean things which here below reside,
Where birds like watchful Clocks the noiseless date
And Intercourse of times divide,
Where Bees at night get home and hive, and flowrs
Early, aswell as late,
Rise with the Sun, and set in the same bowrs;

I would (said I) my God would give
The staidness of these things to man! for these
To his divine appointments ever cleve,
And no new business breaks their peace;
The birds nor sow, nor reap, yet sup and dine,
The flowers without clothes live,
Yet *Solomon* was never drest so fine.

Man hath stil either toyes, or Care,
He hath no root, nor to one place is ty'd,
But ever restless and Irregular
About this Earth doth run and ride,
He knows he hath a home, but scarce knows where,
He sayes it is so far
That he hath quite forgot how to go there.

He knocks at all doors, strays and roams,
Nay hath not so much wit as some stones have
Which in the darkest nights point to their homes,
By some hid sense their Maker gave;
Man is the shuttle, to whose winding quest
And passage through these looms
God order'd motion, but ordain'd no rest.

HENRY VAUGHAN

They Are All Gone

They are all gone into the world of light,
And I alone sit ling'ring here;
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

It blows and glitters in my cloudy breast
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest
After the sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days:
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmerings and decays.

O holy Hope! and high Humility,
High as the heavens above!
These are your walks, and you have show'd them me.
To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous Death! the jewel of the Just,
Shining nowhere, but in the dark;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark!

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may know,
At first sigh, if the bird be flown;
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet as Angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul, when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
And into glory peep.

If a star were confined into a tomb
Her captived flames must needs burn there;
But when the hand that locked her up gives room,
She'll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under thee!
Resume Thy spirit from this world of thrall
Into true liberty.

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
My perspective still as they pass;
Or else remove me hence unto that hill,
Where I shall need no glass.

HENRY VAUGHAN

Rom. Cap. 8. Ver. 19

And do they so? have they a Sense
Of ought but Influence?
Can they their heads lift, and expect,
And grone too? why th' Elect
Can do no more: my volumes sed
They were all dull, and dead,
They judg'd them senslesse, and their state
Wholly Inanimate.
Go, go; Seal up thy looks,
And burn thy books.

I would I were a stone, or tree,
Or flowre by pedigree,
Or some poor high-way herb, or Spring
To flow, or bird to sing!
Then should I (tyed to one sure state,)
All day expect my date;
But I am sadly loose, and stray
A giddy blast each way;
O let me not thus range!
Thou canst not change.

Sometimes I sit with thee, and tarry
An hour, or so, then vary.
Thy other Creatures in this Scene
Thee only aym, and mean;
Some rise to seek thee, and with heads
Erect peep from their beds;
Others, whose birth is in the tomb,
And cannot quit the womb,
Sigh there, and grone for thee,
Their liberty.

O let not me do lesse! shall they
  Watch, while I sleep, or play?
Shall I thy mercies still abuse
  With fancies, friends, or newes?
O brook it not! thy bloud is mine,
  And my soul should be thine;
O brook it not! why wilt thou stop
  After whole showres one drop?
Sure, thou wilt joy to see
    Thy sheep with thee.

HENRY VAUGHAN

JOHN HALL
1627-1656

An Epicurean Ode

Since this thing we call the world
By chance on Atomes is begot,
Which though in dayly motions hurld,
    Yet weary not,
    How doth it prove
Thou art so fair and I in Love?

Since that the soul doth onely lie
Immers'd in matter, chaind in dense,
How can *Romira* thou and I
    With both dispence?
    And thus ascend
In higher flights than wings can lend.

Since man's but pasted up of Earth,
And ne're was cradled in the skies,
What *Terra Lemnia* gave thee birth?
    What Diamond eyes?
    Or thou alone
To tell what others were, came down?

JOHN HALL

JOHN BUNYAN
1628-1688

Thou Simple Bird

Thou simple Bird, what mak'st thou here to play?
Look, there's the Fowler, prethee come away.
Dost not behold the Net? Look there 'tis spread,
Venture a little further thou art dead.
  Is there not room enough in all the Field
For thee to play in, but thou needs must yield
To the deceitful glitt'ring of a Glass,
Placed betwixt Nets to bring thy death to pass?
  Bird, if thou art so much for dazling light,
Look, there's the Sun above thee, dart upright.
Thy nature is to soar up to the Sky,
Why wilt thou come down to the nets, and dye?
  Take no heed to the Fowler's tempting Call;
This whistle he enchanteth Birds withal.
Or if thou seest a live Bird in his net,
Believe she's there 'cause thence she cannot get.
Look how he tempteth thee with his Decoy,
That he may rob thee of thy Life, thy Joy:
Come, prethee Bird, I prethee come away,
Why should this net thee take, when 'scape thou may?
  Hadst thou not Wings, or were thy feathers pulled,
Or wast thou blind or fast asleep wer't lulled:
The case would somewhat alter, but for thee,
Thy eyes are ope, and thou hast Wings to see.
  Remember that thy Song is in thy Rise,
Not in thy Fall, Earth's not thy Paradise.
Keep up aloft then, let thy circuits be
Above, where Birds from Fowlers nets are free . . .

JOHN BUNYAN

JOHN DRYDEN
1631-1700

A Song For St. Cecilia's Day, 1687

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
When nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
'Arise, ye more than dead!'
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound:
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

The trumpet's loud clangour
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger,
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!

The soft complaining flute,
In dying notes, discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

But O, what art can teach,
What human voice can reach,
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees uprooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd
Mistaking Earth for Heaven.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the Blest above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky!

JOHN DRYDEN

Stanzas from 'Annus Mirabilis'

The Year of Wonders, 1666.

In thriving arts long time had Holland grown,
Crouching at home and cruel when abroad:
Scarce leaving us the means to claim our own;
Our king they courted, and our merchants aw'd.

Trade, which like blood should circularly flow,
Stopp'd in their channels, found its freedom lost:
Thither the wealth of all the world did go,
And seem'd but shipwreck'd on so base a coast.

For them alone the Heavens had kindly heat;
In eastern quarries ripening precious dew:
For them the Idumæan balm did sweat,
And in hot Ceilon spicy forests grew.

The Sun but seem'd the laborer of the year;
Each waxing Moon supplied her watery store,
To swell those tides which from the line did bear
Their brim full vessels to the Belgian shore.

Thus, mighty in her ships, stood Carthage long,
And swept the riches of the world from far;
Yet stoop'd to Rome, less wealthy, but more strong;
And this may prove our second Punic war.

What peace can be, where both to one pretend?
(But they more diligent, and we more strong)
Or if a peace, it soon must have an end;
For they would grow too powerful were it long.

Behold two nations, then, engag'd so far,
That each seven years the fit must shake each land
Where France will side to weaken us by war,
Who only can his vast designs withstand.

See how he feeds th' Iberian with delays,
To render us his timely friendship vain:
And while his secret soul on Flanders preys,
He rocks the cradle of the babe of Spain.

Such deep designs of empire does he lay
O'er them, whose cause he seems to take in hand
And prudently would make them lords at sea,
To whom with ease he can give laws by land.

This saw our king; and long within his breast
His pensive counsels balanc'd to and fro:
He griev'd the land he freed should be oppress'd
And he less for it than usurpers do.

His generous mind the fair ideas drew
Of fame and honor, which in dangers lay;
Where wealth, like fruit on precipices, grew
Not to be gather'd but by birds of prey.

The loss and gain each fatally were great;
And still his subjects call'd aloud for war.
But peaceful kings, o'er martial people set,
Each other's poise and counterbalance are.

He first survey'd the charge with careful eyes,
Which none but mighty monarchs could maintain;
Yet judg'd, like vapors that from limbecs rise,
It would in richer showers descend again.

At length resolv'd t'assert the watery ball,
He in himself did whole armadoes bring.
Him aged seamen might their master call,
And choose for general, were he not their king.

It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,
His awful summons they so soon obey;
So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows,
And so to pasture follow through the sea.

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;
And Heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.

Whether they unctuous exhalations are,
Fir'd by the Sun, or seeming so alone;
Or each some more remote and slippery star,
Which loses footing when to mortals shown:

Or one, that bright companion of the Sun,
Whose glorious aspect seal'd our new-born king;
And now, a round of greater years begun,
New influence from his walks of light did bring.

Victorious York did first with fam'd success,
To his known valor make the Dutch give place:
Thus Heaven our monarch's fortune did confess,
Beginning conquest from his royal race.

But since it was decreed, auspicious king,
In Britain's right that thou shouldst wed the main,
Heaven, as a gage, would cast some precious thing,
And therefore doom'd that Lawson should be slain.

Lawson amongst the foremost met his fate,
Whom sea-going Sirens from the rocks lament:
Thus as an offering for the Grecian state,
He first was kill'd who first to battle went.

Their chief blown up in air, not waves, expir'd,
To which his pride presum'd to give the law:
The Dutch confess'd Heaven present, and retir'd,
And all was Britain's the wide ocean saw.

JOHN DRYDEN

WILLIAM CLELAND
1661-1686

Hallo My Fancy

In melancholic fancy,
Out of my self,
In the vulcan dancy,
All the world surveying,
Nowhere staying,
Just like a fairy elf:
Out o'er the tops of highest mountains skipping,
Out o'er the hill, the trees and valleys tripping,
Out o'er the ocean seas, without an oar or shipping,—
Hallo my fancy, whither wilt thou go?

Amid the misty vapors
Fain would I know
What doth cause the tapers;
Why the clouds benight us
And affright us,
While we travel here below;
Fain would I know what makes the roaring thunder,
And what these lightenings that rend the clouds asunder,
And what these comets are on which we gaze and wonder—
Hallo my fancy, whither wilt thou go?

Fain would I know the reason,
Why the little ant,
All the summer season,
Layeth up provision
On condition
To know no winter's want.
And how housewives, that are so good and painful,
Do unto their husbands prove so good and gainful;
And why the lazy drones to them do prove disdainful—
Hallo my fancy, whither wilt thou go? . . .

Amidst the foamy ocean,
Fain would I know
What doth cause the motion,
And returning
In its journeying,
And doth so seldom swerve?
And how the little fishes that swim beneath salt waters,
Do never blind their eye; methinks it is a matter
An inch above the reach of old Erre Pater!—
Hallo my fancy, whither wilt thou go?

Fain would I be resolved
How things are done;
And where the bull was calved
Of bloody Phalaris,
And where the tailor is
That works to the man in the moon!
Fain would I know how Cupid aims so rightly;
And how the little fairies do dance and leap so lightly,
And where fair Cynthia makes her ambles nightly—
Hallo my fancy, whither wilt thou go?

In conceit like Phaeton
I'll mount Phoebus chair
Have ne'er a hat on,
All my hair a-burning
In my journeying;
Hurrying through the air.
Fain would I hear his fiery horses neighing
And see how they on foamy bits are playing,
All the stars and planets I will be surveying!—
Hallo my fancy, whither wilt thou go?

O from what ground of nature
Doth the pelican,
That self-devouring creature
Prove so froward
And untoward,
Her vitals for to strain!

And why the subtle fox while in death's wounds alying,
Doth not lament his pangs by howling and by crying,
And why the milk swan doth sing when she's adying—
Hallo my fancy, whither wilt thou go?

Fain would I conclude this,
At least make essay;
What similitude is:
Why fowls of a feather
Flock and fly together,
And lambs know beasts of prey;
How Nature's alchemists, these small laborous creatures,
Acknowledge still a prince in ordering their matters,
And suffer none to live who slothing lose their features—
Hallo my fancy, whither wilt thou go?

To know this world's centre
Heighth, depth, breadth and length,
Fain would I adventure
To search the hid attractions
Of magnetic actions
And adamantine strength.
Fain would I know, if in some lofty mountain,
Where the moon sojourns, if there be tree or fountain;
If there be beasts of prey, or yet be fields to hunt in—
Hallo my fancy, whither wilt thou go?

Hallo, my fancy, hallo,
Stay, stay at home with me,
I can no longer follow,
For thou hast betrayed me,
And bewrayed me;
It is too much for thee.
Stay, stay at home with me, leave off thy lofty soaring;
Stay then at home with me, and on thy books be poring;
For he that goes abroad, lays little up in storing—
Thou'rt welcome my fancy, welcome home to me.

WILLIAM CLELAND

MATTHEW PRIOR
1664-1721

An English Padlock

Miss Danae, when fair and young,
(As Horace has divinely sung,)
Could not be kept from Jove's embrace
By doors of steel, and walls of brass.
The reason of the thing is clear
Would Jove the naked truth aver.
Cupid was with him of the party,
And show'd himself sincere and hearty;
For, give that whipster but his errand,
He takes my lord chief justice' warrants:
Dauntless as Death, away he walks;
Breaks the doors open, snaps the locks,
Searches the parlor, chamber, study;
Nor stops till he has culprit's body.
"Since this has been authentic truth
By age deliver'd down to youth;
Tell us, mistaken husband, tell us,
Why so mysterious, why so jealous?
Does the restraint, the bolt, the bar,
Make us less curious, her less fair?
The spy, which does this treasure keep,
Does she ne'er say her prayers, nor sleep
Does she to no excess incline?
Does she fly music, mirth, and wine?
Or have not gold and flattery power
To purchase one unguarded hour?
"Your care does further yet extend:
That spy is guarded by your friend.—
But has this friend nor eye nor heart?
May he not feel the cruel dart,
Which, soon or late, all mortals feel?
May he not, with too tender zeal,

Give the fair prisoner cause to see,
How much he wishes she were free?
May he not craftily infer
The rules of friendship too severe,
Which chain him to a hated trust;
Which make him wretched, to be just?
And may not she, this darling she,
  Youthful and healthy, flesh and blood,
Easy with him, ill us'd by thee,
  Allow this logic to be good?"
  "Sir, will your questions never end?
I trust to neither spy nor friend.
In short, I keep her from the sight
Of every human face."—"She'll write."—
  "From pen and paper she's debarr'd."—
  "Has she a bodkin and a card?
She'll prick her mind."—"She will, you say:
But how shall she that mind convey?
I keep her in one room: I lock it:
The key, (look here,) is in this pocket."—
"The key-hole, is that left?"—"Most certain."—
"She'll thrust her letter through, Sir Martin."—
  "Dear, angry friend, what must be done?
"Is there no way?"—"There is but one.
Send her abroad: and let her see,
That all this mingled mass, which she,
Being forbidden, longs to know,
Is a dull farce, an empty show,
Powder, and pocket-glass, and beau;
A staple of romance and lies,
False tears and real perjuries:
Where sighs and looks are bought and sold,
And love is made but to be told:
Where the fat bawd and lavish heir
The spoils of ruin'd beauty share;
And youth, seduc'd from friends and fame
Must give up age to want and shame.
Let her behold the frantic scene,

The women wretched, false the men:
And when, these certain ills to shun,
She would to thy embraces run,
Receive her with extended arms,
Seem more delighted with her charms;
Wait on her to the Park and play;
Put on good humor; make her gay;
Be to her virtues very kind;
Be to her faults a little blind;
Let all her ways be unconfin'd;
And clap your padlock—on her mind."

MATTHEW PRIOR

DEAN JONATHAN SWIFT
1667-1745

A Gentle Echo on Woman
In the Doric Manner

Shepherd. Echo, I ween, will in the woods reply,
And quaintly answer questions; shall I try?
Echo. Try.

Shep. What must we do our passion to express?
Echo. Press.

Shep. What most moves women when we them address?
Echo. A dress.

Shep. Say, what can keep her chaste whom I adore?
Echo. A door.

Shep. If music softens rocks, love tunes my lyre.
Echo. Liar.

Shep. Then teach me, Echo, how shall I come by her?
Echo. Buy her.

Shep. But what can glad me when she's laid on bier?
Echo. Beer.

Shep. What must I do when women will be kind?
Echo. Be kind.

Shep. What must I do when women will be cross?
Echo. Be cross.

Shep. Lord, what is she that can so turn and wind?
Echo. Wind.

Shep. If she be wind, what stills her when she blows?
Echo. Blows.

* * * * *

Shep. Thanks, gentle Echo! right thy answers tell
What woman is and how to guard her well.
Echo. Guard her well.

DEAN JONATHAN SWIFT

ALEXANDER POPE
1688-1744

From 'Essay on Man'

KNOW then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man.
Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:

Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

ALEXANDER POPE

To a Lady

NOTHING so true as what you once let fall,
"Most women have no characters at all."
Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
And best distinguish'd by black, brown, or fair.
How many pictures of one nymph we view,
All how unlike each other, all how true!
Arcadia's countess, here, in ermin'd pride,
Is, there, Pastora by a fountain side.
Here Fannia, leering on her own good man,
And there, a naked Leda with a swan.
Let them the fair-one beautifully cry,
In Magdalene's loose hair, and lifted eye,
Or drest in smiles of sweet Cecilia shine,
With simpering angels, palms, and harps divine;
Whether the charmer sinner it, or saint it,
If folly grow romantic, I must paint it.
Come then, the colors and the ground prepare!
Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air;
Choose a firm cloud, before it fall, and in it
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute.
Rufa, whose eye, quick glancing o'er the Park
Attracts each light gay meteor of a spark,
Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,
As Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock;
Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
With Sappho fragrant at an evening mask:
So morning insects, that in muck begun,

Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting-sun.
How soft is Silia! fearful to offend;
The frail-one's advocate, the weak-one's friend.
To her Calista prov'd her conduct nice,
And good Simplicius asks of her advice.
Sudden, she storms! she raves! You tip the wink,
But spare your censure; Silia does not drink.
All eyes may see from what the change arose,
All eyes may see—a pimple on her nose.
Papillia, wedded to her amorous spark,
Sighs for the shades—"How charming is a park!"
A park is purchas'd, but the fair he sees
All bath'd in tears—"Oh, odious, odious trees!"
Ladies, like variegated tulips, show,
'Tis to their changes half their charms we owe;
Fine by defect, and delicately weak,
Their happy spots the nice admirer take.
'Twas thus Calypso once each heart alarm'd,
Aw'd without virtue, without beauty charm'd,
Her tongue bewitch'd as oddly as her eyes,
Less wit than mimic, more a wit than wise;
Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had
Was just not ugly, and was just not mad;
Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create.
As when she touch'd the brink of all we hate.
Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
To make a wash, would hardly stew a child;
Has ev'n been prov'd to grant a lover's prayer,
And paid a tradesman once to make him stare;
Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,
And made a widow happy, for a whim.
Why then declare good-nature is her scorn,
When 'tis by that alone she can be borne?
Why pique all mortals, yet affect a name?
A fool to pleasure, yet a slave to fame:
Now deep in Taylor and the Book of Martyrs,
Now drinking citron with his grace at Chartres
Now conscience chills her, and now passion burns

And atheism and religion take their turns;
A very heathen in the carnal part,
Yet still a sad good Christian at her heart.
  See Sin in state, majestically drunk,
Proud as a peeress, prouder as a punk;
Chaste to her husband, frank to all beside,
A teeming mistress, but a barren bride.
What then? let blood and body bear the fault,
Her head's untouch'd, that noble seat of thought;
Such this day's doctrine—in another fit
She sins with poets through pure love of wit.
What has not fir'd her bosom or her brain?
Cæsar and Tall-boy, Charles and Charlemagne.
As Hellus, late dictator of the feast,
The nose of Haut-gout, and the tip of Taste,
Critiqu'd your wine, and analyz'd your meat,
Yet on plain pudding deign'd at home to eat:
So Philomede, lecturing all mankind
On the soft passion, and the taste refin'd,
Th' address, the delicacy—stoops at once,
And makes her hearty meal upon a dunce.
  Flavia 's a wit, has too much sense to pray;
To toast our wants and wishes, is her way;
Nor asks of God, but of her stars, to give
The mighty blessing, "while we live, to live."
Then all for death, that opiate of the soul!
Lucretia's dagger, Rosamonda's bowl.
Say, what can cause such impotence of mind?
A spark too fickle, or a spouse too kind?
Wise wretch! with pleasures too refin'd to please;
With too much spirit to be e'er at ease;
With too much quickness ever to be taught;
With too much thinking to have common thought:
You purchase pain with all that joy can give,
And die of nothing but a rage to live.
  Turn then from wits; and look on Simo's mate,
No ass so meek, no ass so obstinate.
Or her, that owns her faults, but never mends,

Because she's honest, and the best of friends.
Or her, whose life the church and scandal share,
For ever in a passion, or a prayer.
Or her, who laughs at Hell, but (like her grace)
Cries, "Ah! how charming, if there's no such place!"
Or who in sweet vicissitude appears
Of mirth and opium, ratafie and tears,
The daily anodyne, and nightly draught,
To kill those foes to fair-ones, time and thought.
Woman and fool are too hard things to hit;
For true no meaning puzzles more than wit.
But what are these to great Atossa's mind?
Scarce once herself, by turns all woman-kind!
Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
Finds all her life one warfare upon Earth:
Shines, in exposing knaves, and painting fools,
Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules.
No thought advances, but her eddy brain
Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
Full sixty years the world has been her trade,
The wisest fool much time has ever made.
From loveless youth to unrespected age,
No passion gratified, except her rage,
So much the fury still outran the wit,
The pleasure mist her, and the scandal hit.
Who breaks with her, provokes revenge from Hell,
But he's a bolder man who dares be well.
Her every turn with violence pursued,
Nor more a storm her hate than gratitude:
To that each passion turns, or soon or late;
Love, if it makes her yield, must make her hate:
Superiors? death! and equals? what a curse!
But an inferior not dependant? worse.
Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live;
But die, and she'll adore you—Then the bust
And temple rise—then fall again to dust.
Last night, her lord was all that's good and great;

A knave this morning, and his will a cheat.
Strange! by the means defeated of the ends,
By spirit robb'd of power, by warmth of friends,
By wealth of followers! without one distress
Sick of herself, through very selfishness!
Atossa, curs'd with every granted prayer,
Childless with all her children, wants an heir.
To heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,
Or wanders, Heaven-directed, to the poor.
Pictures, like these, dear madam, to design,
Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;
Some wandering touches, some reflected light,
Some flying stroke alone can hit them right:
For how should equal colors do the knack?
Chameleons who can paint in white and black?
"Yet Chloe sure was form'd without a spot."—
Nature in her then err'd not, but forgot.
"With every pleasing, every prudent part
Say, what can Chloe want?"—She wants a heart.
She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought;
But never, never reach'd one generous thought.
Virtue she finds too painful an endeavor,
Content to dwell in decencies for ever.
So very reasonable, so unmov'd,
As never yet to love, or to be lov'd.
She, while her lover pants upon her breast,
Can mark the figures on an Indian chest;
And when she sees her friend in deep despair,
Observes how much a chintz exceeds mohair.
Forbid it, Heaven, a favor or a debt
She e'er should cancel—but she may forget.
Safe is your secret still in Chloe's ear;
But none of Chloe's shall you ever hear.
Of all her dears she never slander'd one,
But cares not if a thousand are undone.
Would Chloe know if you're alive or dead?
She bids her footman put it in her head.
Chloe is prudent—Would you too be wise?

Then never break your heart when Chloe dies.
One certain portrait may (I grant) be seen,
Which Heaven has varnish'd out, and made a queen
The same for ever! and describ'd by all
With truth and goodness, as with crown and ball.
Poets heap virtues, painters gems at will,
And show their zeal, and hide their want of skill.
'Tis well—but, artists! who can paint or write,
To draw the naked is your true delight.
That robe of quality so struts and swells,
None see what parts of Nature it conceals:
Th' exactest traits of body or of mind,
We owe to models of an humble kind.
If Queensberry to strip there's no compelling,
'Tis from a handmaid we must take a Helen.
From peer or bishop 'tis no easy thing
To draw the man who loves his God, or king:
Alas! I copy (or my draught would fail)
From honest Mah'met, or plain parson Hale.
But grant, in public, men sometimes are shown,
A woman's seen in private life alone.
Our bolder talents in full life display'd;
Your virtues open fairest in the shade.
Bred to disguise, in public 'tis you hide;
There, none distinguish 'twixt your shame or pride,
Weakness or delicacy; all so nice,
That each may seem a virtue, or a vice.
In men, we various ruling passion find;
In women, two almost divide the kind:
Those, only fix'd, they first or last obey,
The love of pleasure, and the love of sway.
That, Nature gives; and where the lesson taught
Is but to please, can pleasure seem a fault?
Experience, this; by man's oppression curst,
They seek the second not to lose the first.
Men, some to business, some to pleasure take;
But every woman is at heart a rake:
Men, some to quiet, some to public strife;

But every lady would be queen for life.
Yet mark the fate of a whole sex of queens!
Power all their end, but beauty all the means:
In youth, they conquer with so wild a rage,
As leaves them scarce a subject in their age.
For foreign glory, foreign joy, they roam;
No thought of peace or happiness at home.
But wisdom's triumph is well-tim'd retreat,
As hard a science to the fair as great!
Beauties, like tyrants, old and friendless grown,
Yet hate repose, and dread to be alone,
Worn out in public, weary every eye,
Nor leave one sigh behind them when they die.
Pleasures the sex, as children birds, pursue,
Still out of reach, yet never out of view;
Sure, if they catch, to spoil the toy at most,
To covet flying, and regret when lost:
At last, to follies youth could scarce defend,
It grows their age's prudence to pretend;
Asham'd to own they gave delight before,
Reduc'd to feign it, when they give no more.
As hags hold sabbaths, less for joy than spite,
So these their merry, miserable night:
Still round and round the ghosts of beauty glide,
And haunt the places where their honor died.
See how the world its veterans rewards!
A youth of frolics, an old-age of cards:
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end;
Young without lovers, old without a friend;
A fop their passion, but their prize a sot;
Alive, ridiculous; and dead, forgot!
Ah, friend! to dazzle let the vain design;
To raise the thought, and touch the heart, be thine!
That charm shall grow, while what fatigues the ring,
Flaunts and goes down, an unregarded thing:
So when the Sun's broad beam has tir'd the sight,
All mild ascends the Moon's more sober light,
Serene in virgin modesty she shines,

And unobserv'd the glaring orb declines.
Oh, blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day:
She, who can love a sister's charms, or hear
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
She who ne'er answers till a husband cools,
Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;
Charms by accepting by submitting sways,
Yet has her humor most, when she obeys;
Let fops or Fortune fly which way they will,
Disdains all loss of tickets, or codille;
Spleen, vapors, or small-pox, above them all,
And mistress of herself, though china fall.
And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
Woman's at best a contradiction still.
Heaven when it strives to polish all it can
Its last best work, but forms a softer man;
Picks from each sex, to make the favorite blest,
Your love of pleasure, our desire of rest:
Blends, in exception to all general rules,
Your taste of follies, with our scorn of fools:
Reserve with frankness, art with truth allied,
Courage with softness, modesty with pride;
Fix'd principles, with fancy ever new;
Shakes all together, and produces—you.
Be this a woman's fame! with this unblest,
Toasts live a scorn, and queens may die a jest.
This Phœbus promis'd (I forget the year)
When those blue eyes first open'd on the sphere;
Ascendant Phœbus watch'd that hour with care,
Averted half your parents' simple prayer;
And gave you beauty, but denied the pelf
That buys your sex a tyrant o'er itself.
The generous god, who wit and gold refines,
And ripens spirits as he ripens mines,
Kept dross for duchesses, the world shall know it,
To you gave sense, good-humor, and a poet.

ALEXANDER POPE

From 'Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot'

A. What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?
Satire of sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks.
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis.

ALEXANDER POPE

THOMAS GRAY
1716-1771

Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that, from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the Moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team a-field!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil.
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonor'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the Sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that bubbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping woful wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the 'custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he:

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown,
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear;
He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No further seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

THOMAS GRAY

THOMAS CHATTERTON

1752-1770

O! Synge untoe Mie Roundelaie

O! SYNGE untoe mie roundelaie,
O! droppe the brynie teare wythe mee,
Daunce ne moe atte hallie daie,
Lycke a rennynge ryver bee;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Blacke hys cryne as the wyntere nyghte,
Whyte hys rode as the sommer snowe,
Rodde hys face as the mornynge lyghte,
Cald he lyes ynne the grave belowe;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Swote hys tongue as the throstles note,
Quycke ynn daunce as thought canne bee,
Defe hys taboure, codgelle stote,
O! hee lyes bie the wyllowe tree:
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Hark, the ravenne flappes hys wynge,
Ynne the briered delle belowe;
Harke! the dethe-owle loude dothe synge,
To the nyghte-mares as heie goe,
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

See! the whyte moone sheenes onne hie,
Whyterre ys mie true love's shroude;
Whyterre yanne the mornynge skie,
Whyterre yanne the evenynge cloude;
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Heere uponne mie true love's grave,
Schalle the baren fleurs be layde,
Nee on hallie seyncte to save
Al the celness of a mayde.
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Wythe mie hondes I'll dente the brieres
Rounde his hallie corse to gre,
Ouphante fairie, lyghte your fyres,
Heere mie bodie still schalle bee.
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Comme, wythe acorne-coppe and thorne,
Drayne mie hartys blodde awaie;
Lyfe and alle yts goode I scorne,
Daunce bie nete, or feaste bie daie.
Mie love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde,
Al under the wyllowe tree.

Waterre wytches, crownede wythe reytes
Bere mee to yer leathalle tyde.
I die: I comme; mie true love waytes.—
Thos the damselle spake, and dyed.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

WILLIAM BLAKE
1757-1828

The Sick Rose

O ROSE, *thou art sick*:
The invisible worm
That flies in the night
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The Tiger

TIGER, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?

What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

WILLIAM BLAKE

London

I WANDERED thro' each charter'd street
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The Human Abstract

Pity would be no more
If we did not make somebody Poor;
And Mercy no more could be
If all were as happy as we.

And mutual fear brings peace,
Till the selfish loves increase:
The Cruelty knits a snare
And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with holy fears
And waters the ground with tears:
Then Humility takes its root
Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade
Of Mystery over his head,
And the Catterpiller and Fly
Feed on the Mystery.

And it bears the fruit of Deceit,
Ruddy and sweet to eat,
And the Raven his nest has made
In its thickest shade.

The Gods of the earth and sea
Sought thro' Nature to find this Tree,
But their search was all in vain:
There grows one in the Human Brain.

WILLIAM BLAKE

A Poison Tree

I was angry with my friend,
I told my wrath, my wrath did end;

I was angry with my foe,
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I water'd it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright;
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole
When the night had veil'd the pole:
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretch'd beneath the tree.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Why Should I Care

Why should I care for the men of Thames,
Or the cheating waves of charter'd streams?
Or shrink at the little blasts of fear
That the hireling blows into my ear?

Tho' born on the cheating banks of Thames,
Tho' his waters bathed my infant limbs
The Ohio shall wash his stains from me.
I was born a slave, but I go to be free.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Mock On

Mock on, Mock on Voltaire, Rousseau:
Mock on, Mock on: 'tis all in vain!
You throw the sand against the wind,
And the wind blows it back again.

And every sand becomes a Gem
Reflected in the beams divine;
Blown back they blind the mocking Eye,
But still in Israel's paths they shine.
The Atoms of Democritus
And Newton's Particles of Light
Are sands upon the Red sea shore
Where Isreal's tents do shine so bright.

The Crystal Cabinet

The Maiden caught me in the Wild,
Where I was dancing merrily;
She put me into her Cabinet,
And Lock'd me up with a golden Key.

This Cabinet is form'd of Gold
And Pearl & Crystal shining bright,
And within it opens into a World
And a little lovely Moony Night.

Another England there I saw,
Another London with its Tower,
Another Thames & other Hills,
And another pleasant Surrey Bower,

Another Maiden like herself,
Translucent, lovely, shining clear,
Threefold each in the other clos'd—
O what a pleasant trembling fear!

O what a smile! a threefold Smile
Fill'd me, that like a flame I burn'd;
I bent to Kiss the lovely Maid,
And found a Threefold Kiss return'd.

I strove to seize the inmost Form
With ardor fierce & hands of flame,
But burst the Crystal Cabinet
And like a Weeping Babe became:

A weeping Babe upon the wild,
And weeping Woman pale reclin'd,
And in the outward air again
I fill'd with woes the passing Wind.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The Grey Monk

"I DIE, I die!" the Mother said,
"My Children die for lack of Bread.
What more has the merciless Tyrant said?"
The Monk sat down on the Stony Bed.

The blood red ran from the Grey Monk's side,
His hands & feet were wounded wide,
His Body bent, his arms & knees
Like to the roots of ancient trees.

His eye was dry; no tear could flow:
A hollow groan first spoke his woe.
He trembled & shudder'd upon the Bed;
At length with a feeble cry he said:

"When God commanded this hand to write
In the studious hours of deep midnight,
He told me the writing I wrote should prove
The Bane of all that on Earth I lov'd.

"My Brother starv'd between two Walls,
His Children's Cry my Soul appalls;
I mock'd at the wrack & griding chain,
My bent body mocks their torturing pain.

"Thy Father drew his Sword in the North,
With his thousands strong he marched forth,
Thy Brother has arm'd himself in Steel,
To avenge the wrongs thy Children feel.

"But vain the Sword & vain the Bow,
They never can work War's overthrow.
The Hermit's Prayer & the Widow's tear
Alone can free the World from fear.

"For a Tear is an Intellectual Thing,
And a Sigh is the Sword of an Angel King.
And the bitter groan of the Martyr's woe
Is an arrow from the Almightie's Bow.

"The hand of Vengeance found the Bed
To which the Purple Tyrant fled;
The iron hand crush'd the Tyrant's head,
And became a Tyrant in his stead."

WILLIAM BLAKE

Auguries of Innocence

To SEE a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

A Robin Red breast in a Cage
Puts all Heaven in a Rage.

A Dove house fill'd with Doves & Pigeons
Shudders Hell thro' all its regions.

A Dog starv'd at his Master's Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State.

A Horse misus'd upon the Road
Calls to Heaven for Human blood.

Each outcry of the hunted Hare
A fibre from the Brain does tear.

A Skylark wounded in the wing,
A Cherubim does cease to sing.

The Game Cock clip'd & arm'd for fight
Does the Rising Sun affright.

Every Wolf's & Lion's howl
Raises from Hell a Human Soul.

The wild Deer wand'ring here & there
Keeps the Human Soul from Care.

The Lamb misus'd breeds Public strife
And yet forgives the Butcher's Knife.

The Bat that flits at close of Eve
Has left the Brain that won't Believe.
The Owl that calls upon the Night
Speaks the Unbeliever's fright.

He who shall hurt the little Wren
Shall never be belov'd by Men.

He who the Ox to wrath had mov'd
Shall never be by Woman lov'd.

The wanton Boy that kills the Fly
Shall feel the Spider's enmity.

He who torments the Chafer's sprite
Weaves a Bower in endless Night.

The Catterpiller on the Leaf
Repeats to thee thy Mother's grief.

Kill not the Moth nor Butterfly
For the Last Judgment draweth nigh.

He who shall train the Horse to war
Shall never pass the Polar Bar.

The Beggar's Dog & Widow's Cat,
Feed them, & thou wilt grow fat.

The Gnat that sings his Summer's song
Poison gets from Slander's tongue.
The poison of the Snake & Newt
Is the sweat of Envy's Foot.
The Poison of the Honey Bee
Is the Artist's Jealousy.

The Prince's Robes & Beggar's Rags
Are Toadstools on the Miser's Bags.

A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the Lies you can invent.
It is right it should be so;
Man was made for Joy & Woe,
And when this we rightly know,
Thro' the World we safely go.

Joy & Woe are woven fine,
A Clothing for the Soul divine;
Under every grief & pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.

The Babe is more than Swadling Bands,
Throughout all these Human hands,
Tools were made, & Born were hands,
Every Farmer Understands.

Every Tear from Every Eye
Becomes a Babe in Eternity;

This is caught by Females bright
And return'd to its own delight.

The Bleat, the Bark, Bellow & Roar
Are Waves that Beat on Heaven's Shore.

The Babe that weeps the Rod beneath
Writes Revenge in realms of Death.

The Beggar's Rags fluttering in Air
Does to Rags the Heavens tear.

The Soldier arm'd with Sword & Gun
Palsied strikes the Summer's Sun.

The poor Man's Farthing is worth more
Than all the Gold on Afric's Shore.

One Mite wrung from the Lab'rer's hands
Shall buy & sell the Miser's Lands
Or if protected from on high
Does that whole Nation sell & buy.

He who mocks the Infant's Faith
Shall be mock'd in Age & Death.
He who shall teach the Child to Doubt
The rotting Grave shall ne'er get out.
He who respects the Infant's faith
Triumphs over Hell & Death.

The Child's Toys & the Old Man's Reasons
Are the Fruits of the Two seasons.

The Questioner who sits so sly
Shall never know how to Reply.
He who replies to words of Doubt
Doth put the Light of Knowledge out.

The Strongest Poison ever known
Came from Cæsar's Laurel Crown.
Nought can deform the Human Race
Like to the Armour's iron brace.

When Gold & Gems adorn the Plow
To peaceful Arts shall Envy Bow.

A Riddle or the Cricket's Cry
Is to Doubt a fit Reply.

The Emmet's Inch & Eagle's Mile
Make Lame Philosophy to smile.

He who Doubts from what he sees
Will ne'er Believe, do what you Please.
If the Sun & Moon should doubt,
They'd immediately Go out.

To be in a Passion you Good may do,
But no Good if a Passion is in you.

The Whore & Gambler, by the State
Licenc'd, build that Nation's Fate.
The Harlot's cry from Street to Street
Shall weave Old England's winding Sheet.

The Winner's Shout, the Loser's Curse,
Dance before dead England's Hearse.

Every Night & every Morn
Some to Misery are Born.
Every Morn & every Night
Some are Born to sweet delight.
Some are Born to sweet delight,
Some are Born to Endless Night.

We are led to Believe a Lie
When we see not Thro' the Eye

Which was Born in a Night, to perish in a Night,
When the Soul Slept in Beams of Light.
God Appears, & God is Light
To those poor Souls who dwell in Night,
But does a Human Form Display
To those who dwell in Realms of Day.

WILLIAM BLAKE

ROBERT BURNS
1759-1796

To a Mouse

On Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, timorous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murdering pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which maks thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow mortal.

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave
'Sa sma request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the winds are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O'foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid scheme's o' mice an' men,
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us naught but grief an' pain,
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear;
An' forward, though I canna see,
I guess an' fear.

ROBERT BURNS

To a Louse

On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?
Your impudence protects you sairly:
I canna say but ye strunt rarely
Owre gauze and lace;
Though faith, I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt and sinner,
How dare ye set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady?
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner,
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle;
Where ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
Wi' ither kindred, jumpin cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn or bane ne'er dare unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud ye there, ye're out o'sight,
Below the fatt'rils, snug an' tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapmost, towering height
O' miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and gray as onie grozet;
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty doze o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

I wad na been surprised to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy,
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wylie coat;
But miss's fine Lunardi! fie,
How dare ye do't?

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a'abread!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin'
Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin!

O wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
And foolish notion;
What airs in dress and gait wad lea'e us
And e'en devotion!

ROBERT BURNS

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
1770-1850

Ode on Intimations of Immortality

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong.
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;—
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong:
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou child of joy
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!
Ye blesséd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My heart hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning
This sweet May-morning;
And the children are culling

On every side
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have look'd upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Wither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can

To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
Forget the glories he hath known
And that imperial palace whence he came.
Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnéd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal Mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality

Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest,
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
—Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprized:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being

Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor man nor boy
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither;
Can in a moment travel thither—
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then, sing ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We, in thought, will join your throng
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forbode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;

I only have relinquish'd one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway:
I love the brooks which down their channels fret
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet:
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The World Is Too Much with Us

The World is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

LORD BYRON
1788-1824

Lines Inscribed upon a Cup Formed from a Skull

START not—nor deem my spirit fled:
In me behold the only skull,
From which, unlike a living head,
Whatever flows is never dull.

I lived, I loved, I quaffed like thee;
I died; let earth my bones resign;
Fill up—thou canst not injure me;
The worm hath fouler lips than thine.

Better to hold the sparkling grape,
Than nurse the earth-worm's slimy brood;
And circle in the goblet's shape
The drink of Gods, than reptiles' food.

Where once my wit, perchance, hath shone,
In aid of others' let me shine;
And when, alas! our brains are gone,
What nobler substitute than wine?

Quaff while thou canst: another race,
When thou and thine, like me, are sped,
May rescue thee from earth's embrace,
And rhyme and revel with the dead.

Why not? since through life's little day
Our heads such sad effects produce;
Redeemed from worms and wasting clay,
This chance is theirs, to be of use.

LORD BYRON

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
1792-1822

Ozymandias

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my words, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Fragment from 'Prometheus'

ERE Babylon was dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of love and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live
Till death unite them and they part no more;
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

From End of 'Prometheus'

SPEAK! thy strong words may never pass away . . .

Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;
These are the spells by which to reassume
An empire o'er the disentangled gloom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy power which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Hymn to Intellectual Beauty

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats, though unseen, among us; visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower;
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,

It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
Like memory of music fled,
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of Beauty! that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form, where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river;
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown;
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom, why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given:
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavour:
Frail spells, whose utter'd charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone, like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night-wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope and Self-esteem, like clouds, depart,
And come, for uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,

Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes;
Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came;
Depart not, lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead:
I call'd on poisonous names with which our youth is fed:
I was not heard: I saw them not.
When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me:
I shriek'd, and clasp'd my hands in ecstasy!

I vow'd that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine: have I not kept the vow?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in vision'd bowers
Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatch'd with me the envious night:
They know that never joy illumined my brow,
Unlink'd with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery,
That thou, O awful Loveliness,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past: there is a harmony
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,

Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my pensive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm, to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, Spirit fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human-kind.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT
1794-1878

From 'Thanatopsis'

When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;—
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around—
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice—Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock

And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone—nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world—with kings,
The powerful of the earth—the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in a mighty sepulchre. . . .

So shalt thou rest; and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, and the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come,
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glides by, the sons of men,
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron, and maid,
And the sweet babe, and the grey-headed man—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him and lies down to pleasant dreams.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

JOHN KEATS
1795-1821

Sleep and Poetry

Stop and consider! Life is but a day;
A fragile dewdrop on its perilous way
From a tree's summit; a poor Indian's sleep
While his poor boat hastens to the monstrous steep
Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan?
Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown;
The reading of an ever-changing tale;
The light uplifting of a maiden's veil;
A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air;
A laughing school boy, without grief or care,
Riding the springy branches of an elm.

JOHN KEATS

The Human Seasons

Four Seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:

He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves

His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.

He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

JOHN KEATS

RALPH WALDO EMERSON
1803-1882

Give All to Love

Give all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, kindred, days,
Estate, good fame,
Plans, credit and the Muse,—
Nothing refuse.

'Tis a brave master;
Let it have scope:
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope:
High and more high
It dives into noon,
With wing unspent;
Untold intent;
But it is a God,
Knows its own path
And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean;
It requireth courage stout.
Souls above doubt,
Valor unbending,
It will return
More than they were
And ever ascending.

Leave all for love;
Yet, hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved
One pulse more of firm endeavor,—
Keep thee today,
Tomorrow, forever,
Free as an Arab
Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;
But when the surprise,
First vague shadow of surmise
Of a joy apart from thee,
Free be she, fancy free:
Nor thou detain her vestures hem,
Nor the palest rose she flung
From her summers diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Though her parting dims the day,
Stealing grace from all alive;
Heartily know,
When half gods go,
The gods arrive.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

ALFRED TENNYSON
1809-1892

From 'In Memoriam'

A. H. H.
OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo! thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
  Thou madest man, he knows not why;
  He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
  The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
  Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day:
  They have their day and cease to be:
  They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

v.

I sometimes hold it half a sin
  To put in words the grief I feel;
  For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
  A use in measured language lies;
  The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
  Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
  But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

xxxiv.

My own dim life should teach me this,
  That life should live for evermore,
  Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'T were hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness, and to cease.

LIII.

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not any thing:
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LXXXI.

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shattered stalks,
Or ruined chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

CVII.

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, though with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
  But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
  And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
  Of sorrow under human skies:
  'T is held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CXVII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,
  The giant laboring in his youth;
  Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
  Are breathers of an ampler day,
  For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
  And grew to seeming-random forms,
  The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branched from clime to clime,
  The herald of a higher race,
  And of himself in higher place
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
  Or, crowned with attributes of woe
  Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
  And heated hot with burning fears,
  And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
  The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
  Move, upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:
  I think we are not wholly brain,
  Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
  Let science prove we are, and then
  What matters science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
  Hereafter, up from childhood shape
  His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

O true and tried, so well and long
  Demand not thou a marriage lay
  In that it is thy marriage-day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
  Since first he told me that he loved
  A daughter of our house; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Though I since then have numbered o'er
  Some thrice three years: they went and came,
  Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Then in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes,
And then on thee; they meet thy look
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

Oh, when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
Forever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the moon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear:

For I that danced her on my knee,
  That watched her on her nurse's arm,
  That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
  Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
  Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
  The "wilt thou" answered, and again
  The "wilt thou" asked, till out of twain
Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
  Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
  By village eyes as yet unborn;
The names are signed, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
  The joy to every wandering breeze;
  The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

Oh, happy hour, and happier hours
  Await them. Many a merry face
  Salutes them—maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

Oh, happy hour, behold the bride
  With him to whom her hand I gave.
  They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
  For them the light of life increased,
  Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of Eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warmed, and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest
And, though in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favored horses wait:
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she looked, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire;

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain-head
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver through the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved through life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffered, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

ALFRED TENNYSON

EDGAR ALLAN POE
1809-1849

The Haunted Palace

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch's Thought's dominion
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid
A winged odour went away.

Wanderers, in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne, where sitting
(Porphyrogene),
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home, the glory,
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out for ever,
And laugh—but smile no more.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

ROBERT BROWNING
1812-1889

A Light Woman

I

So FAR as our story approaches the end,
Which do you pity the most of us three?—
My friend, or the mistress of my friend
With her wanton eyes, or me?

2

My friend was already too good to lose,
And seemed in the way of improvement yet,
When she crossed his path with her hunting-noose
And over him drew her net.

3

When I saw him tangled in her toils,
A shame, said I, if she adds just him
To her nine-and-ninety other spoils,
The hundredth for a whim!

4

And before my friend be wholly hers,
How easy to prove to him, I said,
An eagle's the game her pride prefers,
Though she snaps at a wren instead!

5

So, I gave her eyes my own eyes to take,
My hand sought hers as in earnest need,
And round she turned for my noble sake,
And gave me herself indeed.

6

The eagle am I, with my fame in the world,
The wren is he, with his maiden face.
You look away and your lip is curled?
Patience, a moment's space!

7

For see, my friend goes shaking and white;
He eyes me as the basilisk:
I have turned it appears, his day to night,
Eclipsing his sun's disk.

8

And I did it, he thinks, as a very thief:
"Though I love her—that, he comprehends—
One should master one's passions, (love, in chief)
And be loyal to one's friends!"

9

And she,—she lies in my hand as tame
As a pear late basking over a wall;
Just a touch to try and off it came;
'Tis mine,—can I let it fall?

10

With no mind to eat it, that's the worst!
Were it thrown in the road, would the case assist?
'Twas quenching a dozen blue-flies' thirst
When I gave its stalk a twist.

11

And I,—what I seem to my friend, you see:
What I soon shall seem to his love, you guess:
What I seem to myself, do you ask of me?
No hero, I confess.

12

'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls,
And matter enough to save one's own:
Yet think of my friend, and the burning coals,
He played with for bits of stone!

13

One likes to show the truth for the truth;
That the woman was light is very true:
But suppose she says,—Never mind that youth!
What wrong have I done to you?

14

Well, anyhow, here the story stays,
So far at least as I understand;
And, Robert Browning, you writer of plays,
Here's a subject made to your hand!

ROBERT BROWNING

Two in the Campagna

1

I WONDER do you feel today
As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

2

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

3

Help me to hold it! First it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
Some old tomb's ruin: yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

4

Where one small orange cup amassed
Five beetles,—blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal: and last,
Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast!

5

The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

6

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting nature have her way
While heaven looks from its towers!

7

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above!
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

8

I would that you were all to me,
You that are just as much, no more.
Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!
Where does the fault lie? What the core
O' the wound, since wound must be?

9

I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs—your part my part
In life, for good and ill.

10

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth—I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes.

11

Already how am I so far
Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star?

12

Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern—
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

ROBERT BROWNING

The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church

Rome, 15—

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not!
She, men would have to be your mother once, Well—
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,

Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she did so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the deadnight, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side.
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I. . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,

Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'T was ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve.
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,

And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glittle like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—

And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
—Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

ROBERT BROWNING

HENRY DAVID THOREAU
1817-1862

Inspiration

If with light head erect I sing,
Though all the Muses lend their force,
From my poor love of any thing,
The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope,
Listening behind me for my wit,
With faith superior to hope,
More anxious to keep back than forward it;

Making my soul accomplice there
Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
Then will the verse forever wear,—
Time cannot bend the line which God has writ.

I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before;
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life,
Of manhood's strength it is the flower,
'Tis peace's end, and war's beginning strife.

It comes in summer's broadest noon,
By a gray wall, or some chance place,
Unseasoning time, insulting June,
And vexing day with its presuming face.

I will not doubt the love untold
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wooed me young, and wooed me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

EMILY BRONTË
1818-1848

Lines from 'The Prisoner'

"Oh! dreadful is the check, intense the agony,
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see;
When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again;
The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

"Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less;
The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless;
And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine,
If it but herald death, the vision is divine!"

She ceased to speak, and we, unanswering, turned to go—
We had no further power to work the captive woe:
Her cheek, her gleaming eye, declared that man had given
A sentence, unapproved, and overruled by Heaven.

Then like a tender child whose hand did just enfold
Safe in its eager grasp a bird it wept to hold,
When pierced with one wild glance from the troubled hazel eye,
It gushes into tears and lets its treasure fly.

Thus ruth and selfish love, together striving, tore
The heart all newly taught to pity and adore;
If I should break the chain, I felt my bird would go;
Yet I must break the chain, or seal the prisoner's woe.

EMILY BRONTË

WALT WHITMAN
1819-1892

Song for All Seas, All Ships

To-day a rude brief recitative,
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal,
Of unnamed heroes in the ships—of waves spreading and spreading far as the eye can reach,
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations.
Fitful, like a surge.

Of sea-captains young or old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors,
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor death dismay,
Picked sparingly without noise by thee, old ocean, chosen by thee,
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest nations,
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,
Indomitable, untamed as thee . . .
Flaunt out, O sea, your separate flags of nations!
Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals!
But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man one flag above all the rest,
A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,

Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and
mates,
And all that went down doing their duty,
Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains
young or old,
A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all
brave sailors,
All seas, all ships.

WALT WHITMAN

MATTHEW ARNOLD
1822-1888

The Last Word

Creep into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said.
Vain thy onset! all stands fast!
Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired; best be still.

They out-talk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee?
Better men fared worse before thee!
Fired their ringing shot and pass'd,
Hotly charged—and broke at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall!

MATTHEW ARNOLD

EMILY DICKINSON
1830-1886

Pain Has an Element of Blank

Pain has an element of blank;
It cannot recollect
When it began, or if there were
A day when it was not.

It has no future but itself,
Its infinite realms contain
Its past, enlightened to perceive
New periods of pain.

EMILY DICKINSON

The Soul Selects Her Own Society

The soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

EMILY DICKINSON

The Heart Asks Pleasure First

The heart asks pleasure first,
And then, excuse from pain;
And then, those little anodynes
That deaden suffering;

And then, to go to sleep;
And then, if it should be
The will of its Inquisitor,
The liberty to die.

EMILY DICKINSON

I'm Nobody! Who Are You?

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

EMILY DICKINSON

I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed

I taste a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days
From inns of molten blue.

When landlords turn the drunken bee
Out of the foxglove's door,
When butterflies renounce their drams,
I shall but drink the more!

Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,
And saints to windows run,
To see the little tippler
Leaning against the sun!

EMILY DICKINSON

The Brain Within Its Groove

The brain within its groove
Runs evenly and true;
But let a splinter swerve,
'T were easier for you
To put the water back
When floods have slit the hills,
And scooped a turnpike for themselves,
And blotted out the mills!

EMILY DICKINSON

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE
1837-1909

The Garden of Proserpine

Here, where the world is quiet,
  Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
  In doubtful dreams of dreams,
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
  A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep,
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap;
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers,
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
And far from eye or ear,
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated,
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though lone reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than Love's who fears to greet her,
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born,
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things:
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be—
That no life lives forever,
That dead men rise up never,
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light,
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight,
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal,
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

FRANCIS THOMPSON
1859-1907

The Hound of Heaven

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;

And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.'

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love Who followed,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to:
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clanged bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover—
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,

The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue. [feet:—
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid!
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
'Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning,
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured dais,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the days spring.'
So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one—

Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumed of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;
With them joyed or was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound I speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences. . .
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
And past those noised Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet—
'Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.'

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenceless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.
Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
Ah! must—
Designer infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tea-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity;
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again.

But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
'And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught' (He said),
'And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!'
Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

FRANCIS THOMPSON

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY
1878-1914

Triad

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

RUPERT BROOKE
1887-1915

Heaven

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
Each secret fishy hope or fear.
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be All, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
Shall come of Water and of Mud;
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry.
Mud unto mud!—Death eddies near—
Not here the appointed End, not here!
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time.
Is wetter water, slimier slime!
And there, (they trust) there swimmeth One

Who swam ere rivers were begun,
Immense, of fishy form and mind;
And under that Almighty Fin,
The littlest fish may enter in.
Oh! never fly conceals the hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found;
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

RUPERT BROOKE

ELINOR WYLIE
1887-1928

The Eagle and the Mole

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

ELINOR WYLIE

Tortoise in Eternity

WITHIN my house of patterned horn
I sleep in such a bed
As men may keep before they're born
And after they are dead.

Sticks and stones may break their bones,
And words may make them bleed;
There is not one of them who owns
An armor to his need.

Tougher than hide or lozened bark,
Snow-storm and thunder proof,
And quick with sun, and thick with dark,
Is this my darling roof.

Men's troubled dreams of death and birth
Pulse mother-of-pearl to black;
I bear the rainbow bubble Earth
Square on my scornful back.

ELINOR WYLIE

LÉONIE ADAMS
1899

Death and the Lady

Death to the Lady said
While she to dancing-measures still
Would move, while beauties on her lay,
Simply as dews the buds do fill,
Death said: "Stay!
Tell me, Lady,
If in your breast the lively breath
May flicker for a little space,
What ransom will you give to death,
Lady?" he said.
"O not one joy, O not one grace,
And what is your will to my will?
I can outwit parched fancies still."
To Death said the Lady.

Death to that Lady said,
When blood went numb and wearily,
"In innocency dear breath you drew,
And marrow and bloom you rendered me."
She said: "True."
"How now, Lady?"
"My heart sucked up its sweet at will,
Whose scent when substance' sweet is past,
Is lovely still, is lovely still,
Death," she said.
"For bones' reprieve the dreams go last:
Soon, soon your flowery show did part,
But preciously I cull the heart,"
Death said to the Lady.

Death to that Lady said:
"Is then not all our bargain done?
Or why do you beckon me so fast

To chaffer for a skeleton
Flesh must cast,
Ghostly Lady?"
"For, Death, that I would have you drain
From my dead heart the blood that stands
So chilly in the withered vein.
And, Death," she said,
"Give my due bones into your hands."
"Beauties I claim at morning-prime,
But the lack-lustre in good time."
Death said to the Lady.

LÉONIE ADAMS

CONRAD AIKEN
1889

Morning Song from 'Senlin'

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
I arise, I face the sunrise,
And do the things my fathers learned to do.
Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops
Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more.
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
Crash on a white sand shore.
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:
How small and white my face!—
The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space.

There are houses hanging above the stars
And stars hung under the sea . . .
And a sun far off in a shell of silence
Dapples my walls for me. . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
Should I not pause in the light to remember God?
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
He is immense and lonely as a cloud.
I will dedicate this moment before the mirror
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair.
Accept these humble offerings, clouds of silence!
I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
The snail-track shines on the stones;
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree . . .
Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.
The walls are about me still as in the evening,
I am the same, and the same name still I keep.
The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
The stars pale silently in a coral sky.
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains . . .
It is morning, I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more;
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
There are suns beneath my floor . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
And depart on the winds of space for I know not where;
My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket,
And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair.
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
And a god among the stars; and I will go
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
And humming a tune I know . . .

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

CONRAD AIKEN

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT
1886

The Falconer of God

I FLUNG my soul to the air like a falcon flying.
I said, "Wait on, wait on, while I ride below!
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A strange white heron rising with silver on its wings,
Rising and crying
Wordless, wondrous things;
The secret of the stars, of the world's heart-strings
The answer to their woe.
Then stoop thou upon him, and grip and hold him so!"

My wild soul waited on as falcons hover.
I beat the reedy fens as I trampled past.
I heard the mournful loon
In the marsh beneath the moon.
And then—with feathery thunder—the bird of my desire
Broke from the cover
Flashing silver fire.
High up among the stars I saw his pinions spire.
The pale clouds gazed aghast
As my falcon stoopt upon him, and gript and held him fast.

My soul dropt through the air—with heavenly plunder?—
Gripping the dazzling bird my dreaming knew?
Nay! but a piteous freight,
A dark and heavy weight
Despoiled of silver plumage, its voice forever stilled,—
All of the wonder
Gone that ever filled
Its guise with glory. Oh, bird that I have killed,
How brilliantly you flew
Across my rapturous vision when first I dreamed of you!

Yet I fling my soul on high with new endeavor,
And I ride the world below with a joyful mind.
I shall start a heron soon
In the marsh beneath the moon—
A wondrous silver heron its inner darkness fledges!
I beat forever
The fens and the sedges.
The pledge is still the same—for all disastrous pledges,
All hopes resigned!
My soul still flies above me for the quarry it shall find.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

LOUISE BOGAN
1897

The Alchemist

I BURNED my life, that I might find
A passion wholly of the mind,
Thought divorced from eye and bone,
Ecstasy come to breath alone.
I broke my life, to seek relief
From the flawed light of love and grief.

With mounting beat the utter fire
Charred existence and desire.
It died low, ceased its sudden thresh.
I had found unmysterious flesh—
Not the mind's avid substance—still
Passionate beyond the will.

LOUISE BOGAN

Chanson Un Peu Naïve

WHAT body can be plowed,
Sown, and broken yearly?
She would not die, she vowed,
But she has, nearly.
Sing, heart, sing;
Call and carol clearly.

And, since she would not die,
Care would be a feather,
A film over the eye
Of two that lie together
Fly, song, fly,
Break your little tether.

So from strength concealed
She makes her pretty boast;
Plain is a furrow healed
And she may love you most.
Cry, song, cry,
And hear your crying lost.

LOUISE BOGAN

Women

Women have no wilderness in them,
They are provident instead,
Content in the bright hot cells of their hearts
To eat dusty bread.

They do not see cattle cropping red winter grass,
They do not hear
Snow water going down under culverts
Shallow and clear.

They wait, when they should turn to journeys,
They stiffen when they should bend.
They use against themselves that benevolence
To which no man is friend.

They cannot think of so many crops to a field
Or of clean wood cleft by an axe.
Their love is an eager meaninglessness
Too tense, or too lax.

They hear in every whisper that speaks to them
A shout and a cry.
As like as not, when they take life over their door-sill
They should let it go by.

LOUISE BOGAN

HELEN CAMPBELL

Perfection

Pine trees and mimosa trees have perfection
In the tips of their branches.
Beethoven knew: Greek sculptors knew
Setting eyes and nose apart with a push of the thumbs.

Clouds move in perfection
Whether huge, round,
Or slipping past moons thinly,
Or branching out purple like lilacs.

But I pick up things in my mind
And make poem after poem
As a boy throws stones into a pond
For no reason.
It seems to be my nature to do this.
What do I know of perfection?

HELEN CAMPBELL

MALCOLM COWLEY
1898

The Streets of Air

All night waiting in an empty house
under dry electric moons, they cast
no shadow, a man striding impatiently
sucking a dry pipe, waiting
an empty sacrificial vessel waiting
without patience to be filled with God.

He said
—There was a scratching at the door
the noise of some one fingering the latch
once, but I opened and only found the night
empty of sound, empty—
The images of drouth
in a parched land growing, acacias in the sand
with thorns and thornlike leaves that cast no shadow
dry leaves silently moving in the sun.

A wall rose there, of hewn enormous stones
laid without mortar and a gateway, barred
and skies closed in.
But you shall hear the thunder
of bursting walls, the gates of night swing wide
and journeys will be set against the sunrise
your path shall be the empty streets of air.

MALCOLM COWLEY

HART CRANE
1899

Voyages

VI

Where icy and bright dungeons lift
Of swimmers their lost morning eyes,
And ocean rivers, churning, shift
Green borders under stranger skies,

Steadily as a shell secretes
Its beating leagues of monotone,
Or as many waters trough the sun's
Red kelson past the cape's wet stone;

O rivers mingling toward the sky
And harbor of the phœnix' breast—
My eyes pressed black against the prow,
—Thy derelict and blinded guest

Waiting, afire, what name, unspoke,
I cannot claim: let thy waves rear
More savage than the death of kings,
Some splintered garland for the seer.

Beyond siroccos harvesting
The solstice thunders, crept away,
Like a cliff swinging or a sail
Flung into April's inmost day—

Creation's blithe and petalled word
To the lounged goddess when she rose
Conceding dialogue with eyes
That smile unsearchable repose—

Still fervid covenant, Belle Isle,
—Unfolded floating dais before
Which rainbows twine continual hair—
Belle Isle, white echo of the oar!

The imaged Word, it is, that holds
Hushed willows anchored in its glow.
It is the unbetrayable reply
Whose accent no farewell can know.

HART CRANE

E. E. CUMMINGS
1896

From 'La Guerre'

Humanity i love you
because you would rather black the boots of
success than inquire whose soul dangles from his
watch-chain which would be embarassing for both

parties and because you
unflinchingly applaud all
songs containing the words country home and
mother when sung at the old howard

Humanity i love you because
when you're hard up you pawn your
intellegance to buy a drink and when
you're flush pride keeps

you from the pawn shop and
because you are continually committing
nuisances but more
especially in your own house

Humanity i love you because you
are perpetually putting the secret of
life in your pants and forgetting
it's there and sitting down

on it
and because you are
forever making poems in the lap
of death Humanity

i hate you

E. E. CUMMINGS

From Poems

since feeling is first
who pays any attention
to the syntax of things
will never wholly kiss you;

wholly to be a fool
while Spring is in the world

my blood approves,
and kisses are a better fate

than wisdom
lady i swear by all flowers. Don't cry
—the best gesture of my brain is less than
your eyelids' flutter which says

we are for each other: then
laugh, leaning back in my arms
for life's not a paragraph

And death i think is no parenthesis

E. E. CUMMINGS

From 'Sonnets–Unrealities'

who's most afraid of death? thou
art of him
utterly afraid, i love of thee
(beloved) this

and truly i would be
near when his scythe takes crisply the whim
of thy smoothness. and mark the fainting
murdered petals. with the caving stem.
But of all most would i be one of them

round the hurt heart which do so frailly cling . . . .)
i who am but imperfect in my fear

Or with thy mind against my mind, to hear
nearing our hearts' irrevocable play—
through the mysterious high futile day

an enormous stride
(and drawing thy mouth toward

my mouth, steer our lost bodies carefully downward)

E. E. CUMMINGS

From 'Sonnets–Unrealities'

when unto nights of autumn do complain
earth's ghastlier trees by whom Time measured is
when frost to dance maketh the sagest pane
of littler huts with peerless fantasies
or the unlovely longness of the year

droops with things dead athwart the narrowing hours
and hope(by cold espoused unto fear)
in dreadful corners hideously cowers—

i do excuse me, love, to Death and Time

storms and rough cold, wind's menace and leaf's
from the impressed fingers of sublime [grieving:
Memory, of that loveliness receiving
the image my proud heart cherished as fair.

(The child-head poised with serious hair)

E. E. CUMMINGS

From Poems

(ponder, darling, these busted statues
of yon motheaten forum be aware
notice what hath remained
—the stone cringes
clinging to the stone, how obsolete

lips utter their extant smile . . .
remark

a few deleted of texture
or meaning monuments and dolls

resist Them Greediest Paws of careful
time all of which is extremely
unimportant)whereas Life

matters if or
when the your-and my-
idle vertical worthless
self unite in a peculiarly
momentary

partnership (to instigate
constructive
Horizontal
business . . . even so, let us make haste
—consider well this ruined aqueduct

lady,
which used to lead something into somewhere)

E. E. CUMMINGS

From 'Sonnets—Actualities'

i like my body when it is with your
body. It is so quite new a thing.
Muscles better and nerves more.
i like your body. i like what it does,
i like its hows. i like to feel the spine
of your body and its bones, and the trembling
firm-smoothness and which i will
again and again and again
kiss, i like kissing this and that of you,
i like, slowly stroking the, shocking fuzz
of your electric furr, and what-is-it comes
over parting flesh. . . .And eyes big love-crumbs,

and possibly i like the thrill

of under me you quite so new

E. E. CUMMINGS

From 'Portraits'

between the breasts
of bestial
Marj lie large
men who praise

Marj's cleancornered strokable
body these men's
fingers toss trunks
shuffle sacks spin kegs they

curl
loving
around
beers

the world has
these men's hands but their
bodies big and boozing
belong to

Marj
the greenslim purse of whose
face opens
on a fatgold

grin
hooray
hoorah for the large
men who lie

between the breasts
of bestial Marj
for the strong men
who

sleep between the legs of Lil

E. E. CUMMINGS

T. S. ELIOT
1888

The Hippopotamus

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.

The broad-backed hippopotamus
Rests on his belly in the mud;
Although he seems so firm to us
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh-and-blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err
In compassing material needs,
While the True Church need never stir
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach
The mango on the mango-tree;
But fruits of pomegranate and peach
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,
But every week we here rejoice
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;
God works in a mysterious way—
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing
Ascending from the damp Savannas,
And quiring angels round him sing
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,
Among the saints he shall be seen
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,
While the true Church remains below
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

T. S. ELIOT

Whispers of Immortality

WEBSTER was much possessed by death
And saw the skull beneath the skin;
And breathless creatures underground
Leaned backward with a lipless grin.

Daffodil bulbs instead of balls
Stared from the sockets of the eyes!
He knew that thought clings round dead limbs
Tightening its lusts and luxuries.

Donne, I suppose, was such another
Who found no substitute for sense;
To seize and clutch and penetrate,
Expert beyond experience.

He knew the anguish of the marrow
The ague of the skeleton;
No contact possible to flesh
Allayed the fever of the bone.

Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye
Is underlined for emphasis;
Uncorseted, her friendly bust
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.

The couched Brazilian jaguar
Compels the scampering marmoset
With subtle effluence of cat;
Grishkin has a maisonette;

The sleek Brazilian jaguar
Does not in its arboreal gloom
Distil so rank a feline smell
As Grishkin in a drawing room.

And even the Abstract Entities
Circumambulate her charm;
But our lot crawls between dry ribs
To keep our metaphysics warm.

T. S. ELIOT

A Cooking Egg

En l'an trentiesme de mon aage
Que toutes mes hontes j'ay beues . . .

Pipit sate upright in her chair
Some distance from where I was sitting;
Views of the Oxford Colleges
Lay on the table, with the knitting.

Daguerreotypes and silhouettes,
Her grandfather and great great aunts,
Supported on the mantelpiece
An *Invitation to the Dance.*

I shall not want Honour in Heaven
  For I shall meet Sir Philip Sidney
And have talk with Coriolanus
  And other heroes of that kidney.

I shall not meet Capital in Heaven
  For I shall meet Sir Alfred Mond;
We two shall lie together, lapt
  In a five per cent Exchequer Bond.

I shall not want Society in Heaven,
  Lucretia Borgia shall be my Bride;
Her anecdotes will be more amusing
  Than Pipit's experience could provide.

I shall not want Pipit in Heaven:
  Madam Blavatsky will instruct me
In the Seven Sacred Trances;
  Piccarda de Donati will conduct me . . .

But where is the penny world I bought
  To eat with Pipit behind the screen?
The red-eyed scavengers are creeping
  From Kentish Town and Golder's Green;

Where are the eagles and the trumpets?

Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps.
  Over buttered scones and crumpets
Weeping, weeping multitudes
  Droop in a hundred A. B. C's.

NOTE. An endemic teashop, found in all parts of London. The initials signify: Aerated Bread Company, Ltd.

T. S. ELIOT

Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service

Look, look, master, here comes two religious caterpillars
JEW OF MALTA.

POLYPHILOPROGENITIVE
The sapient sutlers of the Lord
Drift across the window-panes.
In the beginning was the Word.

In the beginning was the Word.
Superfetation of τὸ ἕν,
And at the mensual turn of time
Produced enervate Origen.

A painter of the Umbrian school
Designed upon a gesso ground
The nimbus of the Baptized God.
The wilderness is cracked and browned

But through the water pale and thin
Still shine the unoffending feet
And there above the painter set
The Father of the Paraclete.

* * * * *

The sable presbyters approach
The avenue of penitence;
The young are red and pustular
Clutching Piaculative pence.

Under the penetential gates
Sustained by staring seraphim
Where the souls of the devout
Burn invisible and dim.

Along the garden-wall the bees
With hairy bellies pass between
The staminate and pistilate,
Blest office of the epicene.

Sweeney shifts from ham to ham
Stirring the waters in his bath.
The masters of the subtle schools
Are controversial, polymath.

T. S. ELIOT

ROBERT FROST
1875

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no steps had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

ROBERT FROST

Fire and Ice

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

ROBERT FROST

To Earthward

Love at the lips was touch
As sweet as I could bear;
And once that seemed too much;
I lived on air

That crossed me from sweet things,
The flow of—was it musk
From hidden grapevine springs
Down hill at dusk?

I had the swirl and ache
From sprays of honeysuckle
That when they're gathered shake
Dew on the knuckle.

I craved strong sweets, but those
Seemed strong when I was young;
The petal of the rose
It was that stung.

Now no joy but lacks salt
That is not dashed with pain
And weariness and fault;
I crave the stain

Of tears, the aftermark
Of almost too much love,
The sweet of bitter bark
And burning clove.

When stiff and sore and scarred
I take away my hand
From leaning on it hard
In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough:
I long for weight and strength
To feel the earth as rough
To all my length.

ROBERT FROST

A. E. HOUSMAN
1895

From Far, from Eve and Morning

From far, from eve and morning
And yon twelve-winded sky,
The stuff of life to knit me
Blew hither: here am I.

Now—for a breath I tarry
Nor yet disperse apart—
Take my hand quick and tell me,
What have you in your heart.

Speak now, and I will answer,
How shall I help you, say;
Ere to the wind's twelve quarters
I take my endless way.

A. E. HOUSMAN

ROLFE HUMPHRIES
1894

Sonnet in Vain

Nor sick, nor bent on self-destruction either,
I can not sleep for thinking I must die—
The proud warm substance of the body wither,
Turn humble-cold, and I no more be I.
Hot cruelty, sick love, and lonely sleep,—
These are not much to live for, nor this murk
So permeate with fire and air to keep
The heart assiduous at its crimson work.

But the doom's wonder of the heavy slow
Swing of the turning world around the sun
Is no mean force that easily lets go,
No paltry fare that hunger gnaws upon—
Son of a rich intolerable swarm,
Profusion-bred, to die, o Rolfe, stay warm!

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

STANLEY J. KUNITZ

Change

Dissolving in the chemic vat
Of time, man (gristle and fat),
Corrupting on a rock in space
That crumbles, lifts his impermanent face
To watch the stars, his brain locked tight
Against the tall revolving night.
Yet is he neither here nor there
Because the mind moves everywhere;

And he is neither now nor then
Because tomorrow comes again
Foreshadowed, and the ragged wing
Of yesterday's remembering
Cuts sharply the immediate moon;
Nor is he always: late and soon
Becoming, never being, till
Becoming is a being still.

Here, Now, and Always, man would be
Inviolate eternally:
This is his spirit's trinity.

STANLEY J. KUNITZ

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY
1892

Sonnet

I KNOW I am but summer to your heart,
And not the full four seasons of the year;
And you must welcome from another part
Such noble moods as are not mine, my dear.
No gracious weight of golden fruits to sell
Have I, nor any wise and wintry thing;
And I have loved you all too long and well
To carry still the high sweet breast of Spring.
Wherefore I say: O love, as summer goes,
I must be gone, steal forth with silent drums,
That you may hail anew the bird and rose
When I come back to you, as summer comes.
Else will you seek, at some not distant time,
Even your summer in another clime.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

To the Not Impossible Him

How shall I know, unless I go
  To Cairo and Cathay,
Whether or not this blessed spot
  Is blest in every way?

Now it may be, the flower for me
  Is this beneath my nose;
How shall I tell, unless I smell
  The Carthaginian rose?

The fabric of my faithful love
  No power shall dim or ravel
Whilst I stay here,—but oh, my dear,
  If I should ever travel!

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

Feast

I DRANK at every vine.
  The last was like the first.
I came upon no wine
  So wonderful as thirst.

I gnawed at every root.
  I ate of every plant.
I came upon no fruit
  So wonderful as want.

Feed the grape and bean
  To the vintner and monger;
I will lie down lean
  With my thirst and my hunger.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

MARIANNE MOORE
1887

Diligence Is to Magic as Progress Is to Flight

With an elephant to ride upon—"with rings on her
fingers and bells on her toes,"
she shall outdistance calamity anywhere she goes.
Speed is not in her mind inseparable from carpets. Loco-
motion arose
in the shape of an elephant; she clambered up and chose
to travel laboriously. So far as magic carpets are
concerned, she knows,
that although the semblance of speed may attach to
scare-crows
of aesthetic procedure, the substance of it is embodied in
such of those
tough-grained animals as have outstripped man's whim
to suppose
them ephemera, and have earned that fruit of their ability
to endure blows,
which dubs them prosaic necessities—not curios.

MARIANNE MOORE

HELEN PEARCE
1902

How Is This Vast World Garmented

How is this vast world garmented
As turn on turn it troubles space,

With shifting whiteness for its head
And lifting mountains on its face;

Fierce in its chasms is the rush
Of unleashed waters. Silence fills

Its secret veins with utter hush
Sweet in the marble hearts of hills.

Its gentle girdle is the land
That stretches taut with trees round

Its arched expanse: on either hand
It ceases at the water's sound.

Deep on its swaying ocean floor
Where gold sand and green water meet

Sea-blooms writhe upward to explore
Strange shapes that waver round its feet.

HELEN PEARCE

JOSEPHINE POLLITT

Young Anchorite

Her heart was heathered like a moor,
Cool, and trackless, and secure.

Her heart could flower into fruit,
But seldom human folk took root.

Her closest confidantes, the steady
Shadow-tail, and clock-a-clay;

And when Spring wandered down her way,
Verily she was April's lady.

There came a time when she was told
That at sixteen, one is too old

To swing all day beneath a tree,
And drift through mornings chartlessly:

To run the hills with blowing hair,
And hear time strike, nor heed, nor care . . .

She had many a faithful one.
There came that connoisseur, the sun

Reaching in through the pussywillow
For every tear upon her pillow.

Friend in the lee and friend aweather,
Tactful friend, with beak in feather . . .

Her heart was heathered like a moor,
Cool and trackless and secure.

But her heart had gathered green
Enough to line its deeps, and sheen

Enough, and rain, and dew
Till now its hollows brimmed with blue,

When other hearts like seas alarmed
With winds, beat wildly near;

And when the seas lay still and clear,
Her heart sometimes grew dark, and swarmed.

Sometimes grew seamy black and stormed.

JOSEPHINE POLLITT

EZRA POUND
1885

Δωρια

Be in me as the eternal moods
    of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
    gaiety of flowers.
Have me in the strong loneliness
    of sunless cliffs
And of grey waters.
    Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
    the shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.

EZRA POUND

Further Instructions

Come, my songs, let us express our baser passions,
Let us express our envy of the man with a steady job
    and no worry about the future.
You are very idle, my songs.
I fear you will come to a bad end.
You stand about in the streets,
You loiter at the corners and bus-stops,
You do next to nothing at all.

You do not even express our inner nobilities,
You will come to a very bad end.

And I?
I have gone half cracked,
I have talked to you so much that
    I almost see you about me,
Insolent little beasts, shameless, devoid of clothing!

But you, newest song of the lot,
You are not old enough to have done much mischief,
I will get you a green coat out of China
With dragons worked upon it,
I will get you the scarlet silk trousers
From the statue of the infant Christ in Santa Maria
Novella,
Lest they say we are lacking in taste,
Or that there is no caste in this family.

EZRA POUND

H. PHELPS PUTNAM

Hasbrouck and the Rose

Hasbrouck was there and so were Bill
And Smollet Smith the poet, and Ames was there.
After his thirteenth drink, the burning Smith,
Raising his fourteenth trembling in the air,
Said, "Drink with me, Bill, drink up to the Rose."
But Hasbrouck laughed like old men in a myth,
Inquiring, "Smollet, are you drunk? What rose?"
And Smollet said, "I drunk? It may be so;
Which comes from brooding on the flower, the flower
I mean toward which mad hour by hour
I travel brokenly; and I shall know,
With Hermes and the alchemists—but, hell,
What use is it talking that way to you?
Hard-boiled, unbroken egg, what can you care
For the enfolded passion of the Rose?"
Then Hasbrouck's voice rang like an icy bell:

"Arcane romantic flower, meaning what?
Do you know what it meant? Do I?
We do not know.
Unfolding pungent Rose, the glowing bath

Of ecstasy and clear forgetfulness;
Closing and secret bud one might achieve
By long debauchery—
Except that I have eaten it, and so
There is no call for further lunacy.
In Springfield, Massachussetts, I devoured
The mystic, the improbable, the Rose.
For two nights and a day, rose and rosette
And petal after petal and the heart,
I had my banquet by the beams
Of four electric stars which shone
Weakly into my room, for there,
Drowning their light and gleaming at my side,
Was the incarnate star
Whose body bore the stigma of the Rose.
And that is all I know about the flower;
I have eaten it—it has disappeared
There is no Rose."

Young Smollet Smith let fall his glass, he said,
"O Jesus, Hasbrouck, am I drunk or dead?"

H. PHELPS PUTNAM

JOHN CROWE RANSOM
1888

Piazza Piece

—I AM A gentleman in a dustcoat trying
To make you hear. Your ears are soft and small
And listen to an old man not at all;
They want the young men's whispering and sighing.
But see the roses on your trellis dying
And hear the spectral singing of the moon—
For I must have my lovely lady soon.
I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying.

I am a lady young in beauty waiting
Until my truelove comes, and then we kiss.
But what grey man among the vines is this
Whose words are dry and faint as in a dream?
Back from my trellis, sir, before I scream!
I am a lady young in beauty waiting.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON
1869

Miniver Cheevy

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

CARL SANDBURG
1878

Threes

I WAS a boy when I heard three red words a thousand
Frenchmen died in the streets for: Liberty, Equality,
Fraternity—I asked why men die for words.

I was older; men with mustaches, sideburns, lilacs, told
me
the high golden words are: Mother, Home, and Heaven—
other older men with face decorations said: God, Duty,
Immortality—
they sang these threes slow from deep lungs.

Years ticked off their say-so on the great clocks of doom
and damnation, soup and nuts: meteors flashed their
say-so:
and out of great Russia came three dusky syllables
workmen took guns and went out to die for: Bread,
Peace, Land.

And I met a marine of the U. S. A., a leatherneck with a girl
on his knee for a memory in ports circling the earth and
he said: Tell me how to say three things and I always get
by—gimme a plate of ham and eggs—how much?—and
do you love me, kid?

CARL SANDBURG

Cool Tombs

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a paw-paw in May, did she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero, or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

CARL SANDBURG

WALLACE STEVENS
1879

The Snow Man

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

WALLACE STEVENS

Another Weeping Woman

Pour the unhappiness out
From your too bitter heart,
Which grieving will not sweeten.

Poison grows in this dark.
It is in the water of tears
Its black blooms rise.

The magnificent cause of being,
The imagination, the one reality
In this imagined world

Leaves you
With him for whom no phantasy moves,
And you are pierced by a death.

WALLACE STEVENS

Of the Manner of Addressing Clouds

Gloomy grammarians in golden gowns,
Meekly you keep the immortal rendezvous,
Electing the still sustaining pomps
Of speech which are like music so profound
They seem an exaltation without sound.
Funest philosophers and ponderers,
Their evocations are the speech of clouds.
So speech of your processional returns
In the casual evocations of your tread
Across the stale, mysterious seasons. These
Are the music of meet resignation; these
The responsive, still sustaining pomps for you
To magnify, if in that drifting waste
You are to be accompanied by more
Than mute bare splendors of the sun and moon.

WALLACE STEVENS

Tea at the Palaz of Hoon

Not less because in purple I descended
The western sky through what you called
The loneliest air, not less was I myself.

What was the ointment sprinkled on my beard?
What were the hymns that buzzed beside my ears?
What was the sea whose tide swept through me there?

Out of my mind the golden ointment rained,
And my ears made the blowing hymns they heard.
I was myself the compass of that sea:

I was the world in which I walked, and what I saw
Or heard or felt came not but from myself;
And there I found myself more truly and more strange.

WALLACE STEVENS

To the One of Fictive Music

Sister and mother and diviner love,
And of the sisterhood of the living dead
Most near, most clear, and of the clearest bloom,
And of the fragrant mothers the most dear
And queen, and of diviner love the day
And flame and summer and sweet fire, no thread
Of cloudy silver sprinkles in your gown
Its venom of renown, and on your head
No crown is simpler than the simple hair.

Now, of the music summoned by the birth
That separates us from the wind and sea,
Yet leaves us in them, until earth becomes,
By being so much of the things we are,
Gross effigy and simulacrum, none
Gives motion to perfection more serene
Than yours, out of your perfections wrought,
More rare, or ever of more kindred air
In the laborious weaving that you wear.

For so retentive of themselves are men
That music is intensest which proclaims
The near, the clear, and vaunts the clearest bloom,
And of all vigils musing the obscure,
That apprehends the most which sees and names,
As in your name, an image that is sure,
Among the arrant spices of the sun,
O bough and bush and scented vine, in whom
We give ourselves our likest issuance.

Yet not too like, yet not so like to be
Too near, too clear, saving a little to endow
Our feigning with the strange unlike, whence springs
The difference that heavenly pity brings.
For this, musician, in your girdle fixed
Bear other perfumes. On your pale head wear
A band entwining, set with fatal stones,
Unreal, give back to us what once you gave:
The imagination that we spurned and crave.

WALLACE STEVENS

ALLEN TATE
1899

Idiot

The idiot greens the meadow with his eyes,
The meadow creeps, implacable and still;
A dog barks; the hammock swings; he lies.
One, two, three, the cows bulge on the hill.

Motion, which is not time, erects snowdrifts
While sister's hand sieves waterfalls of lace.
With a palm fan closer than death, he lifts
The Ozarks and tilted seas across his face.

In the long sunset where impatient sound
Strips niggers to a multiple of backs,
Flies yield their heat, magnolias drench the ground
With Appomattox! The shadows lie in stacks.

The julep glass weaves echoes in Jim's kinks
While ashy Jim puts murmurs in the day:
Now in the idiot's heart a chamber stinks
Of dead asters—as the potter's field, of May.

All evening the marsh is a slick pool
Where dream wild hares, witch hazel, pretty girls.
"Up from the important picnic of a fool
Those rotted asters!" Eddy on eddy swirls

The innocent mansion of a panther's heart!
It crumbles; tick-tick, time drags it in;
And now his arteries lag and now they start
Reverence with the frigid gusts of sin.

The stillness pelts the eye, assaults the hair;
A beech sticks out a branch to warn the stars;
A lightning-bug jerks angles in the air,
Diving. "I am the captain of new wars!"

The dusk runs down the lane, driven like hail;
Far-off a precise whistle is escheat
To the dark; and then the towering weak and pale
Covers his eyes with memory like a sheet.

ALLEN TATE

MARK VAN DOREN
1894

Turkey-Buzzards

Silently, every hour, a pair would rise
And float, without an effort, clear of the trees—
Float in a perfect curve, then tilt and drop;
Or tilt again and spiral toward the sun.
They might have been a dream the timber dreamed. . . .
But could have been a conscious thought, that cut
The warm blue world in segments. For the sky,
Unmeasured, was too much that afternoon.
It lay too heavy on us. . . . Happy trees,
If they could so divide it, wing and wing!

MARK VAN DOREN

ROBERT WOLF
1895

Prologue for Modern Civilization

On the small circle of this ancient stage
In stranger rôles than Homer ever dreamt,
I enter now—a smooth, titanic age—
This scene against all prompters to preëmpt.
All things are known or probed by me: I train
Impartial vision on gigantic suns,
On mites in grass, or in my living brain
Upon the very stuff where knowledge runs.
Thus I—this moment lent the flesh and bones
Of those before me, or those whispering yet
In the wings of the future—take my cue in tones
The constellations shall not soon forget;
And though lights flicker fast, and exits slam,
Give to the galleries: I AM THAT I AM.

ROBERT WOLF

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